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Old Manse Edition

THE COMPLETE WRITINGS OF NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

WITH PORTRAITS, ILLUSTRATIONS, AND FACSIMILES

IN TWENTY-TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME XVI

F C YOHN

THE WRITINGS OF

Nathaniel Hawthorne

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN AND COMPANY

TALES AND SKETCHES

BY

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Fanshawe was published in 1828 by Marsh & Capen, Boston. It bore on the title-page a motto from Southey, "Wilt thou go with me?" a curiously appropriate motto for all of Hawthorne's writings; for it has a wistful, mournful cadence, and its invitation is like a beckoning hand. Surely Hawthorne in his novels and tales seemed always asking his readers if they would accompany him on those strange journeys which he took through the uncertain ways of the human soul.

The book had no author's name, and it appears to have made no impression on the public. Hawthorne had been three years out of college, and this was his first venture. It had, as is so often the case, the marks of that period of imaginative activity which falls to a young collegian. Too little familiar with the great world to move with ease in its ways, the student recurs to his college world, and makes that the scene of his fancied adventures, and yet instinctively perceives that the items which make up the incidents of a student's life are foreign from the purposes of romance.

Hawthorne quickly recognized the futility of

his story, and when it failed, as it did almost from the beginning, he made an effort to call in all the copies that were within reach and to destroy them. He made his sister and his most intimate friend give up their copies to be burned, and he never referred to the misadventure. A dozen years after his death a copy was found by his family and reissued.

Of the other tales and sketches in this volume little needs to be said. "The Antique Ring," "An Old Woman's Tale," and "Alice Doane's Appeal" are from the earlier *Riverside Edition*, having been collected from the periodicals in which they first appeared. "The Ghost of Doctor Harris" was first printed in *The Nineteenth Century* for January, 1900, having been furnished to A. M. Wilberforce by a sister of Mrs. John Pemberton Heywood, for whom Hawthorne wrote it out, when he was a guest at her house in Liverpool during the period of his consulate.

Hawthorne himself, in making up his earlier collections of short tales and sketches, drew upon the various magazines and annuals to which he first contributed them. After his death a few others were added, and the field was carefully gleaned. Still, there remained some

pieces which Hawthorne was disinclined to preserve, as he has himself said; and so far as regards an addition to his fame or even to the pleasure to be given to his readers, they might well be left in neglect. But there is a third consideration which cannot wholly be overlooked. Hawthorne's genius has become so fully recognized that the student of literature, and of his special contribution, is eager to trace his characteristics and his growth if possible; for this end even his discarded work has its value. Failures, as well as successes, belong in the make-up of a great writer; and in view of this aspect it has been thought best to print in an appendix four stories which may be looked upon by the curious as possibly throwing light upon Hawthorne's art. It must be premised that neither Hawthorne's name nor one of his *noms de plume* is attached to any one of these pieces. But this is true also of others which are indubitably his, since he included them in his collections. The reader is quite at liberty, therefore, to reject any or all of the four. The editor can simply say that, after carefully reading a considerable number of stories supposed to be Hawthorne's, he is disposed to accept these as having strong internal evidence of authenticity.

"The Young Provincial" is from the *Token* of 1830; "The Haunted Quack" and "The

New England Village" from the *Token* of 1831; and "The Bald Eagle" from the *Token* of 1833.

TALES AND SKETCHES

FANSHAWE

CHAPTER I

"Our court shall be a little Academe." — SHAKESPEARE.

IN an ancient though not very populous settlement, in a retired corner of one of the New England States, arise the walls of a seminary of learning, which, for the convenience of a name, shall be entitled "Harley College." This institution, though the number of its years is inconsiderable compared with the hoar antiquity of its European sisters, is not without some claims to reverence on the score of age; for an almost countless multitude of rivals, by many of which its reputation has been eclipsed, have sprung up since its foundation. At no time, indeed, during an existence of nearly a century, has it acquired a very extensive fame; and circumstances, which need not be particularized, have, of late years, involved it in a deeper obscurity. There are now few candidates for the degrees that the college is authorized to bestow. On two of its annual "Commencement Days,"

there has been a total deficiency of baccalaureates; and the lawyers and divines, on whom doctorates in their respective professions are gratuitously inflicted, are not accustomed to consider the distinction as an honor. Yet the sons of this seminary have always maintained their full share of reputation, in whatever paths of life they trod. Few of them, perhaps, have been deep and finished scholars; but the college has supplied — what the emergencies of the country demanded — a set of men more useful in its present state, and whose deficiency in theoretical knowledge has not been found to imply a want of practical ability.

The local situation of the college, so far secluded from the sight and sound of the busy world, is peculiarly favorable to the moral, if not to the literary, habits of its students; and this advantage probably caused the founders to overlook the inconveniences that were inseparably connected with it. The humble edifices rear themselves almost at the farthest extremity of a narrow vale, which, winding through a long extent of hill country, is well-nigh as inaccessible, except at one point, as the Happy Valley of Abyssinia. A stream, that farther on becomes a considerable river, takes its rise at a short distance above the college, and affords, along its wood-fringed banks, many shady retreats, where even study is pleasant, and idleness

delicious. The neighborhood of the institution is not quite a solitude, though the few habitations scarcely constitute a village. These consist principally of farmhouses, of rather an ancient date (for the settlement is much older than the college), and of a little inn, which even in that secluded spot does not fail of a moderate support. Other dwellings are scattered up and down the valley; but the difficulties of the soil will long avert the evils of a too dense population. The character of the inhabitants does not seem — as there was, perhaps, room to anticipate — to be in any degree influenced by the atmosphere of Harley College. They are a set of rough and hardy yeomen, much inferior, as respects refinement, to the corresponding classes in most other parts of our country. This is the more remarkable, as there is scarcely a family in the vicinity that has not provided, for at least one of its sons, the advantages of a "liberal education."

Having thus described the present state of Harley College, we must proceed to speak of it as it existed about eighty years since, when its foundation was recent and its prospects flattering. At the head of the institution, at this period, was a learned and Orthodox divine, whose fame was in all the churches. He was the author of several works which evinced much erudition and depth of research; and the pub-

lic, perhaps, thought the more highly of his abilities from a singularity in the purposes to which he applied them, that added much to the curiosity of his labors, though little to their usefulness. But, however fanciful might be his private pursuits, Dr. Melmoth, it was universally allowed, was diligent and successful in the arts of instruction. The young men of his charge prospered beneath his eye, and regarded him with an affection that was strengthened by the little foibles which occasionally excited their ridicule. The president was assisted in the discharge of his duties by two inferior officers, chosen from the alumni of the college, who, while they imparted to others the knowledge they had already imbibed, pursued the study of divinity under the direction of their principal. Under such auspices the institution grew and flourished. Having at that time but two rivals in the country (neither of them within a considerable distance), it became the general resort of the youth of the Province in which it was situated. For several years in succession, its students amounted to nearly fifty, — a number which, relatively to the circumstances of the country, was very considerable.

From the exterior of the collegians, an accurate observer might pretty safely judge how long they had been inmates of those classic walls. The brown cheeks and the rustic dress of some

would inform him that they had but recently left the plough to labor in a not less toilsome field; the grave look, and the intermingling of garments of a more classic cut, would distinguish those who had begun to acquire the polish of their new residence; and the air of superiority, the paler cheek, the less robust form, the spectacles of green, and the dress, in general of threadbare black, would designate the highest class, who were understood to have acquired nearly all the science their Alma Mater could bestow, and to be on the point of assuming their stations in the world. There were, it is true, exceptions to this general description. A few young men had found their way hither from the distant seaports; and these were the models of fashion to their rustic companions, over whom they asserted a superiority in exterior accomplishments, which the fresh though unpolished intellect of the sons of the forest denied them in their literary competitions. A third class, differing widely from both the former, consisted of a few young descendants of the aborigines, to whom an impracticable philanthropy was endeavoring to impart the benefits of civilization.

If this institution did not offer all the advantages of elder and prouder seminaries, its deficiencies were compensated to its students by the inculcation of regular habits, and of a deep and awful sense of religion, which seldom deserted

them in their course through life. The mild and gentle rule of Dr. Melmoth, like that of a father over his children, was more destructive to vice than a sterner sway ; and though youth is never without its follies, they have seldom been more harmless than they were here. The students, indeed, ignorant of their own bliss, sometimes wished to hasten the time of their entrance on the business of life ; but they found, in after years, that many of their happiest remembrances, many of the scenes which they would with least reluctance live over again, referred to the seat of their early studies. The exceptions to this remark were chiefly those whose vices had drawn down, even from that paternal government, a weighty retribution.

Dr. Melmoth, at the time when he is to be introduced to the reader, had borne the matrimonial yoke (and in his case it was no light burden) nearly twenty years. The blessing of children, however, had been denied him, — a circumstance which he was accustomed to consider as one of the sorest trials that checkered his pathway ; for he was a man of a kind and affectionate heart, that was continually seeking objects to rest itself upon. He was inclined to believe, also, that a common offspring would have exerted a meliorating influence on the temper of Mrs. Melmoth, the character of whose domestic government often compelled him to

call to mind such portions of the wisdom of antiquity as relate to the proper endurance of the shrewishness of woman. But domestic comforts, as well as comforts of every other kind, have their drawbacks; and, so long as the balance is on the side of happiness, a wise man will not murmur. Such was the opinion of Dr. Melmoth; and with a little aid from philosophy, and more from religion, he journeyed on contentedly through life. When the storm was loud by the parlor hearth, he had always a sure and quiet retreat in his study; and there, in his deep though not always useful labors, he soon forgot whatever of disagreeable nature pertained to his situation. This small and dark apartment was the only portion of the house to which, since one firmly repelled invasion, Mrs. Melmoth's omnipotence did not extend. Here (to reverse the words of Queen Elizabeth) there was "but one master and no mistress;" and that man has little right to complain who possesses so much as one corner in the world where he may be happy or miserable, as best suits him. In his study, then, the doctor was accustomed to spend most of the hours that were unoccupied by the duties of his station. The flight of time was here as swift as the wind, and noiseless as the snowflake; and it was a sure proof of real happiness that night often came upon the student before he knew it was midday.

Dr. Melmoth was wearing towards age (having lived nearly sixty years), when he was called upon to assume a character to which he had as yet been a stranger. He had possessed in his youth a very dear friend, with whom his education had associated him, and who in his early manhood had been his chief intimate. Circumstances, however, had separated them for nearly thirty years, half of which had been spent by his friend, who was engaged in mercantile pursuits, in a foreign country. The doctor had, nevertheless, retained a warm interest in the welfare of his old associate, though the different nature of their thoughts and occupations had prevented them from corresponding. After a silence of so long continuance, therefore, he was surprised by the receipt of a letter from his friend, containing a request of a most unexpected nature.

Mr. Langton had married rather late in life; and his wedded bliss had been but of short continuance. Certain misfortunes in trade, when he was a Benedict of three years' standing, had deprived him of a large portion of his property, and compelled him, in order to save the remainder, to leave his own country for what he hoped would be but a brief residence in another. But, though he was successful in the immediate objects of his voyage, circumstances occurred to lengthen his stay far beyond the period which he had assigned to it. It was difficult so to

arrange his extensive concerns that they could be safely trusted to the management of others; and, when this was effected, there was another not less powerful obstacle to his return. His affairs, under his own inspection, were so prosperous, and his gains so considerable, that, in the words of the old ballad, "He set his heart to gather gold;" and to this absorbing passion he sacrificed his domestic happiness. The death of his wife, about four years after his departure, undoubtedly contributed to give him a sort of dread of returning, which it required a strong effort to overcome. The welfare of his only child he knew would be little affected by this event; for she was under the protection of his sister, of whose tenderness he was well assured. But, after a few more years, this sister, also, was taken away by death; and then the father felt that duty imperatively called upon him to return. He realized, on a sudden, how much of life he had thrown away in the acquisition of what is only valuable as it contributes to the happiness of life, and how short a time was left him for life's true enjoyments. Still, however, his mercantile habits were too deeply seated to allow him to hazard his present prosperity by any hasty measures; nor was Mr. Langton, though capable of strong affections, naturally liable to manifest them violently. It was probable, therefore, that many months might yet elapse before

he would again tread the shores of his native country.

But the distant relative in whose family, since the death of her aunt, Ellen Langton had remained had been long at variance with her father, and had unwillingly assumed the office of her protector. Mr. Langton's request, therefore, to Dr. Melmoth was, that his ancient friend (one of the few friends that time had left him) would be as a father to his daughter till he could himself relieve him of the charge.

The doctor, after perusing the epistle of his friend, lost no time in laying it before Mrs. Melmoth, though this was, in truth, one of the very few occasions on which he had determined that his will should be absolute law. The lady was quick to perceive the firmness of his purpose, and would not (even had she been particularly averse to the proposed measure) hazard her usual authority by a fruitless opposition. But, by long disuse, she had lost the power of consenting graciously to any wish of her husband's.

"I see your heart is set upon this matter," she observed; "and, in truth, I fear we cannot decently refuse Mr. Langton's request. I see little good of such a friend, doctor, who never lets one know he is alive till he has a favor to ask."

"Nay; but I have received much good at his hand," replied Dr. Melmoth; "and, if he asked

more of me, it should be done with a willing heart. I remember in my youth, when my worldly goods were few and ill managed (I was a bachelor then, dearest Sarah, with none to look after my household), how many times I have been beholden to him. And see: in his letter he speaks of presents, of the produce of the country, which he has sent both to you and me."'

"If the girl were country-bred," continued the lady, "we might give her houseroom, and no harm done. Nay, she might even be a help to me; for Esther, our maid servant, leaves us at the month's end. But I warrant she knows as little of household matters as you do yourself, doctor."

"My friend's sister was well grounded in the *re familiari*," answered her husband; "and doubtless she hath imparted somewhat of her skill to this damsel. Besides, the child is of tender years, and will profit much by your instruction and mine."

"The child is eighteen years of age, doctor," observed Mrs. Melmoth, "and she has cause to be thankful that she will have better instruction than yours."

This was a proposition that Dr. Melmoth did not choose to dispute; though he perhaps thought that his long and successful experience in the education of the other sex might make

him an able coadjutor to his wife in the care of Ellen Langton. He determined to journey in person to the seaport where his young charge resided, leaving the concerns of Harley College to the direction of the two tutors. Mrs. Melmoth, who, indeed, anticipated with pleasure the arrival of a new subject to her authority, threw no difficulties in the way of his intention. To do her justice, her preparations for his journey and the minute instructions with which she favored him were such as only a woman's true affection could have suggested. The traveller met with no incidents important to this tale; and, after an absence of about a fortnight, he and Ellen Langton alighted from their steeds (for on horseback had the journey been performed) in safety at his own door.

If pen could give an adequate idea of Ellen Langton's loveliness, it would achieve what pencil (the pencils, at least, of the colonial artists who attempted it) never could; for, though the dark eyes might be painted, the pure and pleasant thoughts that peeped through them could only be seen and felt. But descriptions of beauty are never satisfactory. It must, therefore, be left to the imagination of the reader to conceive of something not more than mortal, nor, indeed, quite the perfection of mortality, but charming men the more, because they felt, that, lovely as she was, she was of like nature to themselves.

From the time that Ellen entered Dr. Melmoth's habitation, the sunny days seemed brighter, and the cloudy ones less gloomy, than he had ever before known them. He naturally delighted in children; and Ellen, though her years approached to womanhood, had yet much of the gayety and simple happiness, because the innocence, of a child. She consequently became the very blessing of his life, — the rich recreation that he promised himself for hours of literary toil. On one occasion, indeed, he even made her his companion in the sacred retreat of his study, with the purpose of entering upon a course of instruction in the learned languages. This measure, however, he found inexpedient to repeat; for Ellen, having discovered an old romance among his heavy folios, contrived, by the charm of her sweet voice, to engage his attention therein till all more important concerns were forgotten.

With Mrs. Melmoth Ellen was not, of course, so great a favorite as with her husband; for women cannot, so readily as men, bestow upon the offspring of others those affections that nature intended for their own; and the doctor's extraordinary partiality was anything rather than a pledge of his wife's. But Ellen differed so far from the idea she had previously formed of her, as a daughter of one of the principal merchants, who were then, as now, like

nobles in the land, that the stock of dislike which Mrs. Melmoth had provided was found to be totally inapplicable. The young stranger strove so hard, too (and undoubtedly it was a pleasant labor), to win her love, that she was successful to a degree of which the lady herself was not, perhaps, aware. It was soon seen that her education had not been neglected in those points which Mrs. Melmoth deemed most important. The nicer departments of cookery, after sufficient proof of her skill, were committed to her care; and the doctor's table was now covered with delicacies, simple indeed, but as tempting on account of their intrinsic excellence as of the small white hands that made them. By such arts as these, — which in her were no arts, but the dictates of an affectionate disposition, — by making herself useful where it was possible, and agreeable on all occasions, Ellen gained the love of every one within the sphere of her influence.

But the maiden's conquests were not confined to the members of Dr. Melmoth's family. She had numerous admirers among those whose situation compelled them to stand afar off, and gaze upon her loveliness, as if she were a star, whose brightness they saw, but whose warmth they could not feel. These were the young men of Harley College, whose chief opportunities of beholding Ellen were upon the Sabbaths, when

she worshipped with them in the little chapel, which served the purposes of a church to all the families of the vicinity. There was, about this period (and the fact was undoubtedly attributable to Ellen's influence), a general and very evident decline in the scholarship of the college, especially in regard to the severer studies. The intellectual powers of the young men seemed to be directed chiefly to the construction of Latin and Greek verse, many copies of which, with a characteristic and classic gallantry, were strewn in the path where Ellen Langton was accustomed to walk. They, however, produced no perceptible effect; nor were the aspirations of another ambitious youth, who celebrated her perfections in Hebrew, attended with their merited success.

But there was one young man, to whom circumstances, independent of his personal advantages, afforded a superior opportunity of gaining Ellen's favor. He was nearly related to Dr. Melmoth, on which account he received his education at Harley College, rather than at one of the English universities, to the expenses of which his fortune would have been adequate. This connection entitled him to a frequent and familiar access to the domestic hearth of the dignitary, — an advantage of which, since Ellen Langton became a member of the family, he very constantly availed himself.

Edward Walcott was certainly much superior,

in most of the particulars of which a lady takes cognizance, to those of his fellow students who had come under Ellen's notice. He was tall; and the natural grace of his manners had been improved (an advantage which few of his associates could boast) by early intercourse with polished society. His features, also, were handsome, and promised to be manly and dignified when they should cease to be youthful. His character as a scholar was more than respectable, though many youthful follies, sometimes, perhaps, approaching near to vices, were laid to his charge. But his occasional derelictions from discipline were not such as to create any very serious apprehensions respecting his future welfare; nor were they greater than, perhaps, might be expected from a young man who possessed a considerable command of money, and who was, besides, the fine gentleman of the little community of which he was a member, — a character which generally leads its possessor into follies that he would otherwise have avoided.

With this youth Ellen Langton became familiar, and even intimate; for he was her only companion, of an age suited to her own, and the difference of sex did not occur to her as an objection. He was her constant companion on all necessary and allowable occasions, and drew upon himself, in consequence, the envy of the college.

CHAPTER II

"Why, all delights are vain, but that most vain,
Which, with pain purchased, doth inherit pain:
As painfully to pore upon a book
To seek the light of truth, while truth, the while,
Doth falsely blind the eyesight of his look."

SHAKESPEARE.

ON one of the afternoons which afforded to the students a relaxation from their usual labors, Ellen was attended by her cavalier in a little excursion over the rough bridle roads that led from her new residence. She was an experienced equestrian, — a necessary accomplishment at that period, when vehicles of every kind were rare. It was now the latter end of spring; but the season had hitherto been backward, with only a few warm and pleasant days. The present afternoon, however, was a delicious mingling of spring and summer, forming in their union an atmosphere so mild and pure, that to breathe was almost a positive happiness. There was a little alternation of cloud across the brow of heaven, but only so much as to render the sunshine more delightful.

The path of the young travellers lay sometimes among tall and thick-standing trees, and sometimes over naked and desolate hills, whence

man had taken the natural vegetation, and then left the soil to its barrenness. Indeed, there is little inducement to a cultivator to labor among the huge stones which there peep forth from the earth, seeming to form a continued ledge for several miles. A singular contrast to this unfavored tract of country is seen in the narrow but luxuriant, though sometimes swampy, strip of interval, on both sides of the stream, that, as has been noticed, flows down the valley. The light and buoyant spirits of Edward Walcott and Ellen rose higher as they rode on; and their way was enlivened, wherever its roughness did not forbid, by their conversation and pleasant laughter. But at length Ellen drew her bridle, as they emerged from a thick portion of the forest, just at the foot of a steep hill.

"We must have ridden far," she observed, — "farther than I thought. It will be near sunset before we can reach home."

"There are still several hours of daylight," replied Edward Walcott; "and we will not turn back without ascending this hill. The prospect from the summit is beautiful, and will be particularly so now in this rich sunlight. Come, Ellen, — one light touch of the whip, — your pony is as fresh as when we started."

On reaching the summit of the hill, and looking back in the direction in which they had come, they could see the little stream, peeping forth

many times to the daylight, and then shrinking back into the shade. Farther on, it became broad and deep, though rendered incapable of navigation, in this part of its course, by the occasional interruption of rapids.

"There are hidden wonders of rock and precipice and cave, in that dark forest," said Edward, pointing to the space between them and the river. "If it were earlier in the day, I should love to lead you there. Shall we try the adventure now, Ellen?"

"O no!" she replied. "Let us delay no longer. I fear I must even now abide a rebuke from Mrs. Melmoth, which I have surely deserved. But who is this, who rides on so slowly before us?"

She pointed to a horseman, whom they had not before observed. He was descending the hill; but, as his steed seemed to have chosen his own pace, he made a very inconsiderable progress.

"O, do you not know him? But it is scarcely possible you should," exclaimed her companion. "We must do him the good office, Ellen, of stopping his progress, or he will find himself at the village, a dozen miles farther on, before he resumes his consciousness."

"Has he then lost his senses?" inquired Miss Langton.

"Not so, Ellen, — if much learning has not

made him mad," replied Edward Walcott. "He is a deep scholar and a noble fellow; but I fear we shall follow him to his grave erelong. Dr. Melmoth has sent him to ride in pursuit of his health. He will never overtake it, however, at this pace."

As he spoke, they had approached close to the subject of their conversation; and Ellen had a moment's space for observation before he started from the abstraction in which he was plunged. The result of her scrutiny was favorable, yet very painful.

The stranger could scarcely have attained his twentieth year, and was possessed of a face and form such as Nature bestows on none but her favorites. There was a nobleness on his high forehead, which time would have deepened into majesty; and all his features were formed with a strength and boldness, of which the paleness, produced by study and confinement, could not deprive them. The expression of his countenance was not a melancholy one: on the contrary, it was proud and high, perhaps triumphant, like one who was a ruler in a world of his own, and independent of the beings that surrounded him. But a blight, of which his thin pale cheek and the brightness of his eye were alike proofs, seemed to have come over him ere his maturity.

The scholar's attention was now aroused by

the hoof-tramps at his side; and, starting, he fixed his eyes on Ellen, whose young and lovely countenance was full of the interest he had excited. A deep blush immediately suffused his cheek, proving how well the glow of health would have become it. There was nothing awkward, however, in his manner; and, soon recovering his self-possession, he bowed to her, and would have ridden on.

"Your ride is unusually long to-day, Fanshawe," observed Edward Walcott. "When may we look for your return?"

The young man again blushed, but answered, with a smile that had a beautiful effect upon his countenance: "I was not, at the moment, aware in which direction my horse's head was turned. I have to thank you for arresting me in a journey which was likely to prove much longer than I intended."

The party had now turned their horses, and were about to resume their ride in a homeward direction; but Edward perceived that Fanshawe, having lost the excitement of intense thought, now looked weary and dispirited.

"Here is a cottage close at hand," he observed. "We have ridden far, and stand in need of refreshment. Ellen, shall we alight?"

She saw the benevolent motive of his proposal, and did not hesitate to comply with it. But, as they paused at the cottage door, she could

not but observe that its exterior promised few of the comforts which they required. Time and neglect seemed to have conspired for its ruin; and, but for a thin curl of smoke from its clay chimney, they could not have believed it to be inhabited. A considerable tract of land in the vicinity of the cottage had evidently been, at some former period, under cultivation, but was now overrun by bushes and dwarf pines, among which many huge gray rocks, ineradicable by human art, endeavored to conceal themselves. About half an acre of ground was occupied by the young blades of Indian corn, at which a half-starved cow gazed wistfully over the mouldering log fence. These were the only agricultural tokens. Edward Walcott, nevertheless, drew the latch of the cottage door, after knocking loudly but in vain.

The apartment which was thus opened to their view was quite as wretched as its exterior had given them reason to anticipate. Poverty was there, with all its necessary and unnecessary concomitants. The intruders would have retired had not the hope of affording relief detained them.

The occupants of the small and squalid apartment were two women, both of them elderly, and, from the resemblance of their features, appearing to be sisters. The expression of their countenances, however, was very different.

One, evidently the younger, was seated on the farther side of the large hearth, opposite to the door at which the party stood. She had the sallow look of long and wasting illness; and there was an unsteadiness of expression about her eyes, that immediately struck the observer. Yet her face was mild and gentle, therein contrasting widely with that of her companion.

The other woman was bending over a small fire of decayed branches, the flame of which was very disproportionate to the smoke, scarcely producing heat sufficient for the preparation of a scanty portion of food. Her profile only was visible to the strangers, though, from a slight motion of her eye, they perceived that she was aware of their presence. Her features were pinched and spare, and wore a look of sullen discontent, for which the evident wretchedness of her situation afforded a sufficient reason. This female, notwithstanding her years and the habitual fretfulness (that is more wearing than time), was apparently healthy and robust, with a dry, leathery complexion. A short space elapsed before she thought proper to turn her face towards her visitors; and she then regarded them with a lowering eye, without speaking, or rising from her chair.

"We entered," Edward Walcott began to say, "in the hope" — But he paused, on perceiving that the sick woman had risen from her

seat, and with slow and tottering footsteps was drawing near to him. She took his hand in both her own; and, though he shuddered at the touch of age and disease, he did not attempt to withdraw it. She then perused all his features, with an expression at first of eager and hopeful anxiety, which faded by degrees into disappointment. Then, turning from him, she gazed into Fanshawe's countenance with the like eagerness, but with the same result. Lastly, tottering back to her chair, she hid her face and wept bitterly. The strangers, though they knew not the cause of her grief, were deeply affected; and Ellen approached the mourner with words of comfort, which, more from their tone than their meaning, produced a transient effect.

"Do you bring news of him?" she inquired, raising her head. "Will he return to me? Shall I see him before I die?" Ellen knew not what to answer; and, ere she could attempt it, the other female prevented her.

"Sister Butler is wandering in her mind," she said, "and speaks of one she will never behold again. The sight of strangers disturbs her, and you see we have nothing here to offer you."

The manner of the woman was ungracious, but her words were true. They saw that their presence could do nothing towards the alleviation of the misery they witnessed; and they felt

that mere curiosity would not authorize a longer intrusion. So soon, therefore, as they had relieved, according to their power, the poverty that seemed to be the least evil of this cottage, they emerged into the open air.

The breath of heaven felt sweet to them, and removed a part of the weight from their young hearts, which were saddened by the sight of so much wretchedness. Perceiving a pure and bright little fountain at a short distance from the cottage, they approached it, and, using the bark of a birch-tree as a cup, partook of its cool waters. They then pursued their homeward ride with such diligence, that, just as the sun was setting, they came in sight of the humble wooden edifice which was dignified with the name of Harley College. A golden ray rested upon the spire of the little chapel, the bell of which sent its tinkling murmur down the valley to summon the wanderers to evening prayers.

Fanshawe returned to his chamber that night, and lighted his lamp as he had been wont to do. The books were around him which had hitherto been to him like those fabled volumes of Magic, from which the reader could not turn away his eye till death were the consequence of his studies. But there were unaccustomed thoughts in his bosom now ; and to these, leaning his head on one of the unopened volumes, he resigned himself.

He called up in review the years, that, even at his early age, he had spent in solitary study, in conversation with the dead, while he had scorned to mingle with the living world, or to be actuated by any of its motives. He asked himself to what purpose was all this destructive labor, and where was the happiness of superior knowledge. He had climbed but a few steps of a ladder that reached to infinity: he had thrown away his life in discovering, that, after a thousand such lives, he should still know comparatively nothing. He even looked forward with dread — though once the thought had been dear to him — to the eternity of improvement that lay before him. It seemed now a weary way, without a resting place and without a termination; and at that moment he would have preferred the dreamless sleep of the brutes that perish to man's proudest attribute, — of immortality.

Fanshawe had hitherto deemed himself unconnected with the world, unconcerned in its feelings, and uninfluenced by it in any of his pursuits. In this respect he probably deceived himself. If his inmost heart could have been laid open, there would have been discovered that dream of undying fame, which, dream as it is, is more powerful than a thousand realities. But, at any rate, he had seemed, to others and to himself, a solitary being, upon whom the

hopes and fears of ordinary men were ineffectual.

But now he felt the first thrilling of one of the many ties, that, so long as we breathe the common air (and who shall say how much longer?), unite us to our kind. The sound of a soft, sweet voice, the glance of a gentle eye, had wrought a change upon him; and in his ardent mind a few hours had done the work of many. Almost in spite of himself, the new sensation was inexpressibly delightful. The recollection of his ruined health, of his habits (so much at variance with those of the world), — all the difficulties that reason suggested were inadequate to check the exulting tide of hope and joy.

CHAPTER III

"And let the aspiring youth beware of love, —
Of the smooth glance beware; for 't is too late
When on his heart the torrent softness pours;
Then wisdom prostrate lies, and fading fame
Dissolves in air away." THOMSON.

A FEW months passed over the heads of Ellen Langton and her admirers, unproductive of events, that, separately, were of sufficient importance to be related. The summer was now drawing to a close; and Dr. Melmoth had received information that his friend's arrangements were nearly completed, and that by the next home-bound ship he hoped to return to his native country. The arrival of that ship was daily expected.

During the time that had elapsed since his first meeting with Ellen, there had been a change, yet not a very remarkable one, in Fanshawe's habits. He was still the same solitary being, so far as regarded his own sex; and he still confined himself as sedulously to his chamber, except for one hour — the sunset hour — of every day. At that period, unless prevented by the inclemency of the weather, he was accustomed to tread a path that wound along the banks of the stream. He had discovered that this was

the most frequent scene of Ellen's walks ; and this it was that drew him thither.

Their intercourse was at first extremely slight, — a bow on the one side, a smile on the other, and a passing word from both ; and then the student hurried back to his solitude. But, in course of time, opportunities occurred for more extended conversation ; so that, at the period with which this chapter is concerned, Fanshawe was, almost as constantly as Edward Walcott himself, the companion of Ellen's walks.

His passion had strengthened more than proportionably to the time that had elapsed since it was conceived ; but the first glow and excitement which attended it had now vanished. He had reasoned calmly with himself, and rendered evident to his own mind the almost utter hopelessness of success. He had also made his resolution strong, that he would not even endeavor to win Ellen's love, the result of which, for a thousand reasons, could not be happiness. Firm in this determination, and confident of his power to adhere to it ; feeling, also, that time and absence could not cure his own passion, and having no desire for such a cure, — he saw no reason for breaking off the intercourse that was established between Ellen and himself. It was remarkable, that, notwithstanding the desperate nature of his love, that, or something connected with it, seemed to have a beneficial effect upon

his health. There was now a slight tinge of color in his cheek, and a less consuming brightness in his eye. Could it be that hope, unknown to himself, was yet alive in his breast; that a sense of the possibility of earthly happiness was redeeming him from the grave?

Had the character of Ellen Langton's mind been different, there might, perhaps, have been danger to her from an intercourse of this nature with such a being as Fanshawe; for he was distinguished by many of those asperities around which a woman's affection will often cling. But she was formed to walk in the calm and quiet paths of life, and to pluck the flowers of happiness from the wayside where they grow. Singularity of character, therefore, was not calculated to win her love. She undoubtedly felt an interest in the solitary student, and perceiving, with no great exercise of vanity, that her society drew him from the destructive intensity of his studies, she perhaps felt it a duty to exert her influence. But it did not occur to her that her influence had been sufficiently strong to change the whole current of his thoughts and feelings.

Ellen and her two lovers (for both, though perhaps not equally, deserved that epithet) had met, as usual, at the close of a sweet summer day, and were standing by the side of the stream, just where it swept into a deep pool. The cur-

rent, undermining the bank, had formed a recess, which, according to Edward Walcott, afforded at that moment a hiding place to a trout of noble size.

"Now would I give the world," he exclaimed with great interest, "for a hook and line, a fish spear, or any piscatorial instrument of death! Look, Ellen, you can see the waving of his tail from beneath the bank!"

"If you had the means of taking him, I should save him from your cruelty, thus," said Ellen, dropping a pebble into the water, just over the fish. "There! he has darted down the stream. How many pleasant caves and recesses there must be under these banks, where he may be happy! May there not be happiness in the life of a fish?" she added, turning with a smile to Fanshawe.

"There may," he replied, "so long as he lives quietly in the caves and recesses of which you speak. Yes, there may be happiness, though such as few would envy; but, then, the hook and line" —

"Which, there is reason to apprehend, will shortly destroy the happiness of our friend the trout," interrupted Edward, pointing down the stream. "There is an angler on his way toward us, who will intercept him."

"He seems to care little for the sport, to judge by the pace at which he walks," said Ellen.

"But he sees, now, that we are observing him, and is willing to prove that he knows something of the art," replied Edward Walcott. "I should think him well acquainted with the stream; for, hastily as he walks, he has tried every pool and ripple where a fish usually hides. But that point will be decided when he reaches yonder old bare oak-tree."

"And how is the old tree to decide the question?" inquired Fanshawe. "It is a species of evidence of which I have never before heard."

"The stream has worn a hollow under its roots," answered Edward, — "a most delicate retreat for a trout. Now, a stranger would not discover the spot; or, if he did, the probable result of a cast would be the loss of hook and line, — an accident that has occurred to me more than once. If, therefore, this angler takes a fish from thence, it follows that he knows the stream."

They observed the fisher, accordingly, as he kept his way up the bank. He did not pause when he reached the old leafless oak, that formed with its roots an obstruction very common in American streams; but, throwing his line with involuntary skill as he passed, he not only escaped the various entanglements, but drew forth a fine large fish.

"There, Ellen, he has captivated your *protégé*, the trout, or, at least, one very like him in

size," observed Edward. "It is singular," he added, gazing earnestly at the man.

"Why is it singular?" inquired Ellen Langton. "This person, perhaps, resides in the neighborhood, and may have fished often in the stream."

"Do but look at him, Ellen, and judge whether his life can have been spent in this lonely valley," he replied. "The glow of many a hotter sun than ours has darkened his brow; and his step and air have something foreign in them, like what we see in sailors who have lived more in other countries than in their own. Is it not so, Ellen? for your education in a seaport must have given you skill in these matters. But come, let us approach nearer."

They walked towards the angler, accordingly, who still remained under the oak, apparently engaged in arranging his fishing tackle. As the party drew nigh, he raised his head, and threw one quick, scrutinizing glance towards them, disclosing, on his part, a set of bold and rather coarse features, weather-beaten, but indicating the age of the owner to be not above thirty. In person he surpassed the middle size, was well set, and evidently strong and active.

"Do you meet with much success, sir?" inquired Edward Walcott, when within a convenient distance for conversation.

"I have taken but one fish," replied the an-

gler, in an accent which his hearers could scarcely determine to be foreign, or the contrary. "I am a stranger to the stream, and have doubtless passed over many a likely place for sport."

"You have an angler's eye, sir," rejoined Edward. "I observed that you made your casts as if you had often trod these banks, and I could scarcely have guided you better myself."

"Yes, I have learned the art, and I love to practise it," replied the man. "But will not the young lady try her skill?" he continued, casting a bold eye on Ellen. "The fish will love to be drawn out by such white hands as those."

Ellen shrank back, though almost imperceptibly, from the free bearing of the man. It seemed meant for courtesy; but its effect was excessively disagreeable. Edward Walcott, who perceived and coincided in Ellen's feelings, replied to the stranger's proposal.

"The young lady will not put the gallantry of the fish to the proof, sir," he said, "and she will therefore have no occasion for your own."

"I shall take leave to hear my answer from the young lady's own mouth," answered the stranger haughtily. "If you will step this way, Miss Langton" (here he interrupted himself), — "if you will cast the line by yonder sunken log, I think you will meet with success."

Thus saying, the angler offered his rod and line to Ellen. She at first drew back, then hesi-

tated, but finally held out her hand to receive them. In thus complying with the stranger's request, she was actuated by a desire to keep the peace, which, as her notice of Edward Walcott's crimsoned cheek and flashing eye assured her, was considerably endangered. The angler led the way to the spot which he had pointed out, which, though not at such a distance from Ellen's companions but that words in a common tone could be distinguished, was out of the range of a lowered voice.

Edward Walcott and the student remained by the oak : the former biting his lip with vexation ; the latter, whose abstraction always vanished where Ellen was concerned, regarding her and the stranger with fixed and silent attention. The young men could at first hear the words that the angler addressed to Ellen. They related to the mode of managing the rod ; and she made one or two casts under his direction. At length, however, as if to offer his assistance, the man advanced close to her side, and seemed to speak, but in so low a tone that the sense of what he uttered was lost before it reached the oak. But its effect upon Ellen was immediate and very obvious. Her eyes flashed ; and an indignant blush rose high on her cheek, giving to her beauty a haughty brightness, of which the gentleness of her disposition in general deprived it. The next moment, however, she

seemed to recollect herself, and, restoring the angling rod to its owner, she turned away calmly, and approached her companions.

"The evening breeze grows chill; and mine is a dress for a summer day," she observed. "Let us walk homeward."

"Miss Langton, is it the evening breeze alone that sends you homeward?" inquired Edward.

At this moment the angler, who had resumed, and seemed to be intent upon his occupation, drew a fish from the pool, which he had pointed out to Ellen.

"I told the young lady," he exclaimed, "that, if she would listen to me a moment longer, she would be repaid for her trouble; and here is the proof of my words!"

"Come, let us hasten towards home!" cried Ellen eagerly; and she took Edward Walcott's arm, with a freedom that, at another time, would have enchanted him. He at first seemed inclined to resist her wishes, but complied, after exchanging, unperceived by Ellen, a glance with the stranger, the meaning of which the latter appeared perfectly to understand. Fanshawe also attended her. Their walk towards Dr. Melmoth's dwelling was almost a silent one; and the few words that passed between them did not relate to the adventure which occupied the

thoughts of each. On arriving at the house, Ellen's attendants took leave of her, and retired.

Edward Walcott, eluding Fanshawe's observation with little difficulty, hastened back to the old oak-tree. From the intelligence with which the stranger had received his meaning glance, the young man had supposed that he would here await his return. But the banks of the stream, upward and downward, so far as his eye could reach, were solitary. He could see only his own image in the water, where it swept into a silent depth; and could hear only its ripple, where stones and sunken trees impeded its course. The object of his search might, indeed, have found concealment among the tufts of alders, or in the forest that was near at hand; but thither it was in vain to pursue him. The angler had apparently set little store by the fruits of his assumed occupation; for the last fish that he had taken lay, yet alive, on the bank, gasping for the element to which Edward was sufficiently compassionate to restore him. After watching him as he glided down the stream, making feeble efforts to resist its current, the youth turned away, and sauntered slowly towards the college.

Ellen Langton, on her return from her walk, found Dr. Melmoth's little parlor unoccupied; that gentleman being deeply engaged in his

study, and his lady busied in her domestic affairs. The evening, notwithstanding Ellen's remark concerning the chillness of the breeze, was almost sultry, and the windows of the apartment were thrown open. At one of these, which looked into the garden, she seated herself, listening, almost unconsciously, to the monotonous music of a thousand insects, varied occasionally by the voice of a whippoorwill, who, as the day departed, was just commencing his song. A dusky tint, as yet almost imperceptible, was beginning to settle on the surrounding objects, except where they were opposed to the purple and golden clouds, which the vanished sun had made the brief inheritors of a portion of his brightness. In these gorgeous vapors, Ellen's fancy, in the interval of other thoughts, pictured a fairyland, and longed for wings to visit it.

But as the clouds lost their brilliancy, and assumed first a dull purple, and then a sullen gray tint, Ellen's thoughts recurred to the adventure of the angler, which her imagination was inclined to invest with an undue singularity. It was, however, sufficiently unaccountable that an entire stranger should venture to demand of her a private audience; and she assigned, in turn, a thousand motives for such a request, none of which were in any degree satisfactory. Her most prevailing thought, though she could not justify it to her reason, inclined her to believe

that the angler was a messenger from her father. But wherefore he should deem it necessary to communicate any intelligence that he might possess only by means of a private interview, and without the knowledge of her friends, was a mystery she could not solve. In this view of the matter, however, she half regretted that her instinctive delicacy had impelled her so suddenly to break off their conference, admitting, in the secrecy of her own mind, that, if an opportunity were again to occur, it might not again be shunned. As if that unuttered thought had power to conjure up its object, she now became aware of a form standing in the garden, at a short distance from the window where she sat. The dusk had deepened, during Ellen's abstraction, to such a degree, that the man's features were not perfectly distinguishable; but the maiden was not long in doubt of his identity, for he approached, and spoke in the same low tone in which he had addressed her when they stood by the stream.

"Do you still refuse my request, when its object is but your own good, and that of one who should be most dear to you?" he asked.

Ellen's first impulse had been to cry out for assistance; her second was to fly: but, rejecting both these measures, she determined to remain, endeavoring to persuade herself that she was safe. The quivering of her voice, however,

when she attempted to reply, betrayed her apprehensions.

"I cannot listen to such a request from a stranger," she said. "If you bring news from — from my father, why is it not told to Dr. Melmoth?"

"Because what I have to say is for your ear alone," was the reply; "and if you would avoid misfortune now, and sorrow hereafter, you will not refuse to hear me."

"And does it concern my father?" asked Ellen eagerly.

"It does — most deeply," answered the stranger.

She meditated a moment, and then replied, "I will not refuse, I will hear — but speak quickly."

"We are in danger of interruption in this place, and that would be fatal to my errand," said the stranger. "I will await you in the garden."

With these words, and giving her no opportunity for reply, he drew back, and his form faded from her eyes. This precipitate retreat from argument was the most probable method that he could have adopted of gaining his end. He had awakened the strongest interest in Ellen's mind; and he calculated justly in supposing that she would consent to an interview upon his own terms.

Dr. Melmoth had followed his own fancies in the mode of laying out his garden ; and, in consequence, the plan that had undoubtedly existed in his mind was utterly incomprehensible to every one but himself. It was an intermixture of kitchen and flower garden, a labyrinth of winding paths, bordered by hedges, and impeded by shrubbery. Many of the original trees of the forest were still flourishing among the exotics which the doctor had transplanted thither. It was not without a sensation of fear, stronger than she had ever before experienced, that Ellen Langton found herself in this artificial wilderness, and in the presence of the mysterious stranger. The dusky light deepened the lines of his dark, strong features ; and Ellen fancied that his countenance wore a wilder and a fiercer look than when she had met him by the stream. He perceived her agitation, and addressed her in the softest tones of which his voice was capable.

"Compose yourself," he said; "you have nothing to fear from me. But we are in open view from the house, where we now stand; and discovery would not be without danger to both of us."

"No eye can see us here," said Ellen, trembling at the truth of her own observation, when they stood beneath a gnarled, low-branched pine, which Dr. Melmoth's ideas of beauty had caused

him to retain in his garden. "Speak quickly; for I dare follow you no farther."

The spot was indeed sufficiently solitary, and the stranger delayed no longer to explain his errand.

"Your father," he began, — "do you not love him? Would you do aught for his welfare?"

"Everything that a father could ask I would do!" exclaimed Ellen eagerly. "Where is my father, and when shall I meet him?"

"It must depend upon yourself, whether you shall meet him in a few days or never."

"Never!" repeated Ellen. "Is he ill? Is he in danger?"

"He is in danger," replied the man, "but not from illness. Your father is a ruined man. Of all his friends, but one remains to him. That friend has travelled far to prove if his daughter has a daughter's affection."

"And what is to be the proof?" asked Ellen, with more calmness than the stranger had anticipated; for she possessed a large fund of plain sense, which revolted against the mystery of these proceedings. Such a course, too, seemed discordant with her father's character, whose strong mind and almost cold heart were little likely to demand, or even to pardon, the romance of affection.

"This letter will explain," was the reply to

Ellen's question. "You will see that it is in your father's hand; and that may gain your confidence, though I am doubted."

She received the letter; and many of her suspicions of the stranger's truth were vanquished by the apparent openness of his manner. He was preparing to speak further, but paused, for a footstep was now heard, approaching from the lower part of the garden. From their situation, — at some distance from the path, and in the shade of the tree, — they had a fair chance of eluding discovery from any unsuspecting passenger; and, when Ellen saw that the intruder was Fanshawe, she hoped that his usual abstraction would assist their concealment.

But, as the student advanced along the path, his air was not that of one whose deep inward thoughts withdrew his attention from all outward objects. He rather resembled the hunter, on the watch for his game; and, while he was yet at a distance from Ellen, a wandering gust of wind waved her white garment, and betrayed her.

"It is as I feared," said Fanshawe to himself. He then drew nigh, and addressed Ellen with a calm authority that became him well, notwithstanding that his years scarcely exceeded her own. "Miss Langton," he inquired, "what do you here at such an hour, and with such a companion?"

Ellen was sufficiently displeased at what she deemed the unauthorized intrusion of Fanshawe in her affairs; but his imposing manner and her own confusion prevented her from replying.

"Permit me to lead you to the house," he continued, in the words of a request, but in the tone of a command. "The dew hangs dank and heavy on these branches; and a longer stay would be more dangerous than you are aware."

Ellen would fain have resisted; but though the tears hung as heavy on her eyelashes, between shame and anger, as the dew upon the leaves, she felt compelled to accept the arm that he offered her. But the stranger, who, since Fanshawe's approach, had remained a little apart, now advanced.

"You speak as one in authority, young man," he said. "Have you the means of compelling obedience? Does your power extend to men? Or do you rule only over simple girls? Miss Langton is under my protection, and, till you can bend me to your will, she shall remain so."

Fanshawe turned calmly, and fixed his eyes on the stranger. "Retire, sir," was all he said.

Ellen almost shuddered, as if there were a mysterious and unearthly power in Fanshawe's voice; for she saw that the stranger endeavored in vain, borne down by the influence of a superior mind, to maintain the boldness of look and bearing that seemed natural to him. He at first

made a step forward, then muttered a few half-audible words; but, quailing at length beneath the young man's bright and steady eye, he turned and slowly withdrew.

Fanshawe remained silent a moment after his opponent had departed; and, when he next spoke, it was in a tone of depression. Ellen observed, also, that his countenance had lost its look of pride and authority, and he seemed faint and exhausted. The occasion that called forth his energies had passed, and they had left him.

"Forgive me, Miss Langton," he said almost humbly, "if my eagerness to serve you has led me too far. There is evil in this stranger, — more than your pure mind can conceive. I know not what has been his errand; but let me entreat you to put confidence in those to whose care your father has intrusted you. Or if I — or — or Edward Walcott — But I have no right to advise you, and your own calm thoughts will guide you best."

He said no more; and, as Ellen did not reply, they reached the house, and parted in silence.

CHAPTER IV

"The seeds by nature planted
Take a deep root in the soil, and though for a time
The trenchant share and tearing harrow may
Sweep all appearance of them from the surface,
Yet with the first warm rains of spring they 'll shoot,
And with their rankness smother the good grain.
Heaven grant, it may n't be so with him."

RICHES.

THE scene of this tale must now be changed to the little inn, which at that period, as at the present, was situated in the vicinity of Harley College. The site of the modern establishment is the same with that of the ancient; but everything of the latter that had been built by hands has gone to decay and been removed, and only the earth beneath and around it remains the same. The modern building, a house of two stories, after a lapse of twenty years, is yet unfinished. On this account, it has retained the appellation of the "New Inn," though, like many who have frequented it, it has grown old ere its maturity. Its dingy whiteness and its apparent superfluity of windows (many of them being closed with rough boards) give it somewhat of a dreary look, especially in a wet day.

The ancient inn was a house, of which the eaves approached within about seven feet of the ground; while the roof, sloping gradually upward, formed an angle at several times that height. It was a comfortable and pleasant abode to the weary traveller, both in summer and winter; for the frost never ventured within the sphere of its huge hearths, and it was protected from the heat of the sultry season by three large elms that swept the roof with their long branches, and seemed to create a breeze where there was not one. The device upon the sign, suspended from one of these trees, was a hand holding a long-necked bottle, and was much more appropriate than the present unmeaning representation of a black eagle. But it is necessary to speak rather more at length of the landlord than of the house over which he presided.

Hugh Crombie was one for whom most of the wise men, who considered the course of his early years, had predicted the gallows as an end before he should arrive at middle age. That these prophets of ill had been deceived was evident from the fact that the doomed man had now passed the fortieth year, and was in more prosperous circumstances than most of those who had wagged their tongues against him. Yet the failure of their forebodings was more remarkable than their fulfilment would have been.

He had been distinguished, almost from his

earliest infancy, by those precocious accomplishments, which, because they consist in an imitation of the vices and follies of maturity, render a boy the favorite plaything of men. He seemed to have received from nature the convivial talents, which, whether natural or acquired, are a most dangerous possession ; and, before his twelfth year, he was the welcome associate of all the idle and dissipated of his neighborhood, and especially of those who haunted the tavern of which he had now become the landlord. Under this course of education, Hugh Crombie grew to youth and manhood ; and the lovers of good words could only say in his favor, that he was a greater enemy to himself than to any one else, and that, if he should reform, few would have a better chance of prosperity than he.

The former clause of this modicum of praise (if praise it may be termed) was indisputable ; but it may be doubted whether, under any circumstances where his success depended on his own exertions, Hugh would have made his way well through the world. He was one of those unfortunate persons, who, instead of being perfect in any single art or occupation, are superficial in many, and who are supposed to possess a larger share of talent than other men, because it consists of numerous scraps, instead of a single mass. He was partially acquainted with most of the manual arts that gave bread to

others; but not one of them, nor all of them, would give bread to him. By some fatality, the only two of his multifarious accomplishments in which his excellence was generally conceded were both calculated to keep him poor rather than to make him rich. He was a musician and a poet.

There are yet remaining in that portion of the country many ballads and songs, — set to their own peculiar tunes, — the authorship of which is attributed to him. In general, his productions were upon subjects of local and temporary interest, and would consequently require a bulk of explanatory notes to render them interesting or intelligible to the world at large. A considerable proportion of the remainder are Anacreontics; though, in their construction, Hugh Crombie imitated neither the Teian nor any other bard. These latter have generally a coarseness and sensuality intolerable to minds even of no very fastidious delicacy. But there are two or three simple little songs, into which a feeling and a natural pathos have found their way, that still retain their influence over the heart. These, after two or three centuries, may perhaps be precious to the collectors of our early poetry. At any rate, Hugh Crombie's effusions, tavern haunter and vagrant though he was, have gained a continuance of fame (confined, indeed, to a narrow section of the country), which many

who called themselves poets then, and would have scorned such a brother, have failed to equal.

During the long winter evenings, when the farmers were idle round their hearths, Hugh was a courted guest; for none could while away the hours more skilfully than he. The winter, therefore, was his season of prosperity; in which respect he differed from the butterflies and useless insects, to which he otherwise bore a resemblance. During the cold months, a very desirable alteration for the better appeared in his outward man. His cheeks were plump and sanguine; his eyes bright and cheerful; and the tip of his nose glowed with a Bardolphian fire, — a flame, indeed, which Hugh was so far a vestal as to supply with its necessary fuel at all seasons of the year. But, as the spring advanced, he assumed a lean and sallow look, wilting and fading in the sunshine that brought life and joy to every animal and vegetable except himself. His winter patrons eyed him with an austere regard; and some even practised upon him the modern and fashionable courtesy of the "cut direct."

Yet, after all, there was good, or something that Nature intended to be so, in the poor outcast, — some lovely flowers, the sweeter even for the weeds that choked them. An instance of this was his affection for an aged father, whose

whole support was the broken reed, — his son. Notwithstanding his own necessities, Hugh contrived to provide food and raiment for the old man : how, it would be difficult to say, and perhaps as well not to inquire. He also exhibited traits of sensitiveness to neglect and insult, and of gratitude for favors ; both of which feelings a course of life like his is usually quick to eradicate.

At length the restraint — for such his father had ever been — upon Hugh Crombie's conduct was removed by death ; and then the wise men and the old began to shake their heads ; and they who took pleasure in the follies, vices, and misfortunes of their fellow creatures looked for a speedy gratification. They were disappointed, however ; for Hugh had apparently determined, that, whatever might be his catastrophe, he would meet it among strangers, rather than at home. Shortly after his father's death, he disappeared altogether from the vicinity ; and his name became, in the course of years, an unusual sound, where once the lack of other topics of interest had given it a considerable degree of notoriety. Sometimes, however, when the winter blast was loud round the lonely farmhouse, its inmates remembered him who had so often chased away the gloom of such an hour, and, though with little expectation of its fulfilment, expressed a wish to behold him again.

Yet that wish, formed, perhaps, because it appeared so desperate, was finally destined to be gratified. One summer evening, about two years previous to the period of this tale, a man of sober and staid deportment, mounted upon a white horse, arrived at the Hand and Bottle, to which some civil or military meeting had chanced, that day, to draw most of the inhabitants of the vicinity. The stranger was well though plainly dressed, and anywhere but in a retired country town would have attracted no particular attention; but here, where a traveller was not of every-day occurrence, he was soon surrounded by a little crowd, who, when his eye was averted, seized the opportunity diligently to peruse his person. He was rather a thick-set man, but with no superfluous flesh; his hair was of iron-gray; he had a few wrinkles; his face was so deeply sunburnt, that, excepting a half-smothered glow on the tip of his nose, a dusky yellow was the only apparent hue. As the people gazed, it was observed that the elderly men and the men of substance gat themselves silently to their steeds, and hied homeward with an unusual degree of haste; till at length the inn was deserted, except by a few wretched objects to whom it was a constant resort. These, instead of retreating, drew closer to the traveller, peeping anxiously into his face, and asking, ever and anon, a question, in order to discover the tone of his voice. At length, with

one consent, and as if the recognition had at once burst upon them, they hailed their old boon companion, Hugh Crombie, and, leading him into the inn, did him the honor to partake of a cup of welcome at his expense.

But, though Hugh readily acknowledged the not very reputable acquaintances who alone acknowledged him, they speedily discovered that he was an altered man. He partook with great moderation of the liquor for which he was to pay; he declined all their flattering entreaties for one of his old songs; and finally, being urged to engage in a game at all-fours, he calmly observed, almost in the words of an old clergyman on a like occasion, that his principles forbade a profane appeal to the decision by lot.

On the next Sabbath Hugh Crombie made his appearance at public worship in the chapel of Harley College; and here his outward demeanor was unexceptionably serious and devout, — a praise which, on that particular occasion, could be bestowed on few besides. From these favorable symptoms, the old established prejudices against him began to waver; and as he seemed not to need, and to have no intention to ask, the assistance of any one, he was soon generally acknowledged by the rich as well as by the poor. His account of his past life, and of his intentions for the future, was brief, but not unsatisfactory. He said that, since his departure, he had been

a seafaring man, and that, having acquired sufficient property to render him easy in the decline of his days, he had returned to live and die in the town of his nativity.

There was one person, and the one whom Hugh was most interested to please, who seemed perfectly satisfied of the verity of his reformation. This was the landlady of the inn, whom, at his departure, he had left a gay, and, even at thirty-five, a rather pretty wife, and whom, on his return, he found a widow of fifty, fat, yellow, wrinkled, and a zealous member of the church. She, like others, had at first cast a cold eye on the wanderer; but it shortly became evident to close observers that a change was at work in the pious matron's sentiments respecting her old acquaintance. She was now careful to give him his morning dram from her own peculiar bottle, to fill his pipe from her private box of Virginia, and to mix for him the sleeping-cup in which her late husband had delighted. Of all these courtesies Hugh Crombie did partake with a wise and cautious moderation, that, while it proved them to be welcome, expressed his fear of trespassing on her kindness. For the sake of brevity, it shall suffice to say, that, about six weeks after Hugh's return, a writing appeared on one of the elm-trees in front of the tavern (where, as the place of greatest resort, such notices were usually displayed), setting forth that marriage

was intended between Hugh Crombie and the Widow Sarah Hutchins. And the ceremony, which made Hugh a landholder, a householder, and a substantial man, in due time took place.

As a landlord, his general conduct was very praiseworthy. He was moderate in his charges, and attentive to his guests; he allowed no gross and evident disorders in his house, and practised none himself; he was kind and charitable to such as needed food and lodging, and had not wherewithal to pay, — for with these his experience had doubtless given him a fellow feeling. He was also sufficiently attentive to his wife; though it must be acknowledged that the religious zeal which had had a considerable influence in gaining her affections grew, by no moderate degrees, less fervent. It was whispered, too, that the new landlord could, when time, place, and company were to his mind, upraise a song as merrily, and drink a glass as jollily, as in the days of yore. These were the weightiest charges that could now be brought against him; and wise men thought, that, whatever might have been the evil of his past life, he had returned with a desire (which years of vice, if they do not sometimes produce, do not always destroy) of being honest, if opportunity should offer; and Hugh had certainly a fair one.

On the afternoon previous to the events related in the last chapter, the personage whose

introduction to the reader has occupied so large a space was seated under one of the elms in front of his dwelling. The bench which now sustained him, and on which were carved the names of many former occupants, was Hugh Crombie's favorite lounging place, unless when his attentions were required by his guests. No demand had that day been made upon the hospitality of the Hand and Bottle; and the landlord was just then murmuring at the unfrequency of employment. The slenderness of his profits, indeed, were no part of his concern; for the Widow Hutchins's chief income was drawn from her farm, nor was Hugh ever miserly inclined. But his education and habits had made him delight in the atmosphere of the inn, and in the society of those who frequented it; and of this species of enjoyment his present situation certainly did not afford an overplus.

Yet had Hugh Crombie an enviable appearance of indolence and ease, as he sat under the old tree, polluting the sweet air with his pipe, and taking occasional draughts from a brown jug that stood near at hand. The basis of the potation contained in this vessel was harsh old cider, from the widow's own orchard; but its coldness and acidity were rendered innocuous by a due proportion of yet older brandy. The result of this mixture was extremely felicitous, pleasant to the taste, and producing a tingling

sensation on the coats of the stomach, uncommonly delectable to so old a toper as Hugh.

The landlord cast his eye, ever and anon, along the road that led down the valley in the direction of the village; and at last, when the sun was wearing westward, he discovered the approach of a horseman. He immediately replenished his pipe, took a long draught from the brown jug, summoned the ragged youth who officiated in most of the subordinate departments of the inn, and who was now to act as hostler, and then prepared himself for confabulation with his guest.

"He comes from the seacoast," said Hugh to himself, as the traveller emerged into open view on the level road. "He is two days in advance of the post, with its news of a fortnight old. Pray Heaven he prove communicative!" Then, as the stranger drew nigher: "One would judge that his dark face had seen as hot a sun as mine. He has felt the burning breeze of the Indies, East and West, I warrant him. Ah, I see we shall send away the evening merrily! Not a penny shall come out of his purse, — that is, if his tongue runs glibly. Just the man I was praying for — Now may the Devil take me if he is!" interrupted Hugh, in accents of alarm, and starting from his seat. He composed his countenance, however, with the power that long habit and necessity had given him over his

emotions, and again settled himself quietly on the bench.

The traveller, coming on at a moderate pace, alighted, and gave his horse to the ragged hostler. He then advanced towards the door near which Hugh was seated, whose agitation was manifested by no perceptible sign, except by the shorter and more frequent puffs with which he plied his pipe. Their eyes did not meet till just as the stranger was about to enter, when he started apparently with a surprise and alarm similar to those of Hugh Crombie. He recovered himself, however, sufficiently to return the nod of recognition with which he was favored, and immediately entered the house, the landlord following.

"This way, if you please, sir," said Hugh. "You will find this apartment cool and retired."

He ushered his guest into a small room the windows of which were darkened by the creeping plants that clustered round them. Entering, and closing the door, the two gazed at each other a little space without speaking. The traveller first broke silence.

"Then this is your living self, Hugh Crombie?" he said. The landlord extended his hand as a practical reply to the question. The stranger took it, though with no especial appearance of cordiality.

"Ay, this seems to be flesh and blood," he

said, in the tone of one who would willingly have found it otherwise. "And how happens this, friend Hugh? I little thought to meet you again in this life. When I last heard from you, your prayers were said, and you were bound for a better world."

"There would have been small danger of your meeting me there," observed the landlord dryly.

"It is an unquestionable truth, Hugh," replied the traveller. "For which reason I regret that your voyage was delayed."

"Nay, that is a hard word to bestow on your old comrade," said Hugh Crombie. "The world is wide enough for both of us; and why should you wish me out of it?"

"Wide as it is," rejoined the stranger, "we have stumbled against each other, — to the pleasure of neither of us, if I may judge from your countenance. Methinks I am not a welcome guest at Hugh Crombie's inn."

"Your welcome must depend on the cause of your coming, and the length of your stay," replied the landlord.

"And what if I come to settle down among these quiet hills where I was born?" inquired the other. "What if I, too, am weary of the life we have led, — or afraid, perhaps, that it will come to too speedy an end? Shall I have your good word, Hugh, to set me up in an hon-

est way of life? Or will you make me a partner in your trade, since you know my qualifications? A pretty pair of publicans should we be; and the quart pot would have little rest between us."

"It may be as well to replenish it now," observed Hugh, stepping to the door of the room, and giving orders accordingly. "A meeting between old friends should never be dry. But for the partnership, it is a matter in which you must excuse me. Heaven knows I find it hard enough to be honest, with no tempter but the Devil and my own thoughts; and, if I have you also to contend with, there is little hope of me."

"Nay, that is true. Your good resolutions were always like cobwebs, and your evil habits like five-inch cables," replied the traveller. "I am to understand, then, that you refuse my offer?"

"Not only that; but, if you have chosen this valley as your place of rest, Dame Crombie and I must look through the world for another. But hush! here comes the wine."

The hostler, in the performance of another part of his duty, now appeared, bearing a measure of the liquor that Hugh had ordered. The wine of that period, owing to the comparative lowness of the duties, was of more moderate

price than in the mother country, and of purer and better quality than at the present day.

"The stuff is well chosen, Hugh," observed the guest, after a draught large enough to authorize an opinion. "You have most of the requisites for your present station; and I should be sorry to draw you from it. I trust there will be no need."

"Yet you have a purpose in your journey hither," observed his comrade.

"Yes; and you would fain be informed of it," replied the traveller. He arose, and walked once or twice across the room; then, seeming to have taken his resolution, he paused, and fixed his eye steadfastly on Hugh Crombie. "I could wish, my old acquaintance," he said, "that your lot had been cast anywhere rather than here. Yet, if you choose it, you may do me a good office, and one that shall meet with a good reward. Can I trust you?"

"My secrecy you can," answered the host, "but nothing further. I know the nature of your plans, and whither they would lead me, too well to engage in them. To say the truth, since it concerns not me, I have little desire to hear your secret."

"And I as little to tell it, I do assure you," rejoined the guest. "I have always loved to manage my affairs myself, and to keep them to

myself. It is a good rule; but it must sometimes be broken. And now, Hugh, how is it that you have become possessed of this comfortable dwelling and of these pleasant fields?"

"By my marriage with the Widow Sarah Hutchins," replied Hugh Crombie, staring at a question which seemed to have little reference to the present topic of conversation.

"It is a most excellent method of becoming a man of substance," continued the traveller; "attended with little trouble, and honest withal."

"Why, as to the trouble," said the landlord, "it follows such a bargain, instead of going before it. And for honesty, — I do not recollect that I have gained a penny more honestly these twenty years."

"I can swear to that," observed his comrade. "Well, mine host, I entirely approve of your doings, and, moreover, have resolved to prosper after the same fashion myself."

"If that be the commodity you seek," replied Hugh Crombie, "you will find none here to your mind. We have widows in plenty, it is true; but most of them have children, and few have houses and lands. But now to be serious, — and there has been something serious in your eye all this while, — what is your purpose in coming hither? You are not safe here. Your name has had a wider spread than mine, and, if discovered, it will go hard with you."

"But who would know me now?" asked the guest.

"Few, few indeed!" replied the landlord, gazing at the dark features of his companion, where hardship, peril, and dissipation had each left their traces. "No, you are not like the slender boy of fifteen, who stood on the hill by moonlight to take a last look at his father's cottage. There were tears in your eyes then; and, as often as I remember them, I repent that I did not turn you back, instead of leading you on."

"Tears, were there? Well, there have been few enough since," said his comrade, pressing his eyelids firmly together, as if even then tempted to give way to the weakness that he scorned. "And, for turning me back, Hugh, it was beyond your power. I had taken my resolution, and you did but show me the way to execute it."

"You have not inquired after those you left behind," observed Hugh Crombie.

"No — no; nor will I have aught of them!" exclaimed the traveller, starting from his seat, and pacing rapidly across the room. "My father, I know, is dead, and I have forgiven him. My mother — what could I hear of her but misery? I will hear nothing."

"You must have passed the cottage as you rode hitherward," said Hugh. "How could you forbear to enter?"

"I did not see it," he replied. "I closed my eyes, and turned away my head."

"O, if I had had a mother, a loving mother! if there had been one being in the world that loved me, or cared for me, I should not have become an utter castaway!" exclaimed Hugh Crombie.

The landlord's pathos, like all pathos that flows from the winecup, was sufficiently ridiculous; and his companion, who had already overcome his own brief feelings of sorrow and remorse, now laughed aloud.

"Come, come, mine host of the Hand and Bottle," he cried, in his usual hard, sarcastic tone, "be a man as much as in you lies! You had always a foolish trick of repentance; but, as I remember, it was commonly of a morning, before you had swallowed your first dram. And now, Hugh, fill the quart pot again, and we will to business."

When the landlord had complied with the wishes of his guest, the latter resumed in a lower tone than that of his ordinary conversation: —

"There is a young lady lately become a resident hereabouts. Perhaps you can guess her name; for you have a quick apprehension in these matters."

"A young lady?" repeated Hugh Crombie. "And what is your concern with her? Do you mean Ellen Langton, daughter of the old mer-

chant Langton, whom you have some cause to remember?"

"I do remember him; but he is where he will speedily be forgotten," answered the traveller. "And this girl, — I know your eye has been upon her, Hugh, — describe her to me."

"Describe her!" exclaimed Hugh with much animation. "It is impossible in prose; but you shall have her very picture in a verse of one of my own songs."

"Nay, mine host, I beseech you to spare me. This is no time for quavering," said the guest. "However, I am proud of your approbation, my old friend; for this young lady do I intend to take to wife. What think you of the plan?"

Hugh Crombie gazed into his companion's face for the space of a moment, in silence. There was nothing in its expression that looked like a jest. It still retained the same hard, cold look, that, except when Hugh had alluded to his home and family, it had worn through their whole conversation.

"On my word, comrade!" he at length replied, "my advice is, that you give over your application to the quart pot, and refresh your brain by a short nap. And yet your eye is cool and steady. What is the meaning of this?"

"Listen, and you shall know," said the guest. "The old man, her father, is in his grave."

"Not a bloody grave, I trust," interrupted

the landlord, starting, and looking fearfully into his comrade's face.

"No, a watery one," he replied calmly. "You see, Hugh, I am a better man than you took me for. The old man's blood is not on my head, though my wrongs are on his. Now listen: he had no heir but this only daughter; and to her, and to the man she marries, all his wealth will belong. She shall marry me. Think you her father will rest easy in the ocean, Hugh Crombie, when I am his son-in-law?"

"No, he will rise up to prevent it, if need be," answered the landlord. "But the dead need not interpose to frustrate so wild a scheme."

"I understand you," said his comrade. "You are of opinion that the young lady's consent may not be so soon won as asked. Fear not for that, mine host. I have a winning way with me, when opportunity serves; and it shall serve with Ellen Langton. I will have no rivals in my wooing."

"Your intention, if I take it rightly, is to get this poor girl into your power, and then to force her into a marriage," said Hugh Crombie.

"It is; and I think I possess the means of doing it," replied his comrade. "But methinks, friend Hugh, my enterprise has not your good wishes."

"No; and I pray you to give it over," said

Hugh Crombie very earnestly. "The girl is young, lovely, and as good as she is fair. I cannot aid in her ruin. Nay, more: I must prevent it."

"Prevent it!" exclaimed the traveller, with a darkening countenance. "Think twice before you stir in this matter, I advise you. Ruin, do you say? Does a girl call it ruin to be made an honest wedded wife? No, no, mine host! nor does a widow either, else have you much to answer for."

"I gave the Widow Hutchins fair play, at least, which is more than poor Ellen is like to get," observed the landlord. "My old comrade, will you not give up this scheme?"

"My old comrade, I will not give up this scheme," returned the other composedly. "Why, Hugh, what has come over you since we last met? Have we not done twenty worse deeds of a morning, and laughed over them at night?"

"He is right there," said Hugh Crombie, in a meditative tone. "Of a certainty, my conscience has grown unreasonably tender within the last two years. This one small sin, if I were to aid in it, would add but a trifle to the sum of mine. But then the poor girl!"

His companion overheard him thus communing with himself, and having had much former experience of his infirmity of purpose, doubted

not that he should bend him to his will. In fact, his arguments were so effectual, that Hugh at length, though reluctantly, promised his co-operation. It was necessary that their motions should be speedy; for on the second day thereafter, the arrival of the post would bring intelligence of the shipwreck by which Mr. Langton had perished.

"And after the deed is done," said the landlord, "I beseech you never to cross my path again. There have been more wicked thoughts in my head within the last hour than for the whole two years that I have been an honest man."

"What a saint art thou become, Hugh!" said his comrade. "But fear not that we shall meet again. When I leave this valley, it will be to enter it no more."

"And there is little danger that any other who has known me will chance upon me here," observed Hugh Crombie. "Our trade was unfavorable to length of days, and I suppose most of our old comrades have arrived at the end of theirs."

"One whom you knew well is nearer to you than you think," answered the traveller; "for I did not travel hitherward entirely alone."

CHAPTER V

"A naughty night to swim in." — SHAKESPEARE.

THE evening of the day succeeding the adventure of the angler was dark and tempestuous. The rain descended almost in a continuous sheet, and occasional powerful gusts of wind drove it hard against the northeastern windows of Hugh Crombie's inn. But at least one apartment of the interior presented a scene of comfort and of apparent enjoyment, the more delightful from its contrast with the elemental fury that raged without. A fire, which the chillness of the evening, though a summer one, made necessary, was burning brightly on the hearth; and in front was placed a small round table, sustaining wine and glasses. One of the guests for whom these preparations had been made was Edward Walcott; the other was a shy, awkward young man, distinguished, by the union of classic and rural dress, as having but lately become a student of Harley College. He seemed little at his ease, probably from a consciousness that he was on forbidden ground, and that the wine, of which he nevertheless swallowed a larger share than his companion, was an unlawful draught.

In the catalogue of crimes provided against by the laws of Harley College, that of tavern-haunting was one of the principal. The secluded situation of the seminary, indeed, gave its scholars but a very limited choice of vices; and this was, therefore, the usual channel by which the wildness of youth discharged itself. Edward Walcott, though naturally temperate, had been not an unfrequent offender in this respect, for which a superfluity both of time and money might plead some excuse. But, since his acquaintance with Ellen Langton, he had rarely entered Hugh Crombie's doors; and an interruption in that acquaintance was the cause of his present appearance there.

Edward's jealous pride had been considerably touched on Ellen's compliance with the request of the angler. He had, by degrees, imperceptible perhaps to himself, assumed the right of feeling displeased with her conduct; and she had, as imperceptibly, accustomed herself to consider what would be his wishes, and to act accordingly. He would, indeed, in no contingency have ventured an open remonstrance; and such a proceeding would have been attended by a result the reverse of what he desired. But there existed between them a silent compact (acknowledged perhaps by neither, but felt by both), according to which they had regulated the latter part of their intercourse. Their lips

had yet spoken no word of love; but some of love's rights and privileges had been assumed on the one side, and at least not disallowed on the other.

Edward's penetration had been sufficiently quick to discover that there was a mystery about the angler, that there must have been a cause for the blush that rose so proudly on Ellen's cheek; and his Quixotism had been not a little mortified, because she did not immediately appeal to his protection. He had, however, paid his usual visit the next day at Dr. Melmoth's, expecting that, by a smile of more than common brightness, she would make amends to his wounded feelings; such having been her usual mode of reparation in the few instances of disagreement that had occurred between them. But he was disappointed. He found her cold, silent, and abstracted, inattentive when he spoke, and indisposed to speak herself. Her eye was sedulously averted from his; and the casual meeting of their glances only proved that there were feelings in her bosom which he did not share. He was unable to account for this change in her deportment; and, added to his previous conceptions of his wrongs, it produced an effect upon his rather hasty temper, that might have manifested itself violently, but for the presence of Mrs. Melmoth. He took his leave in very evident displeasure; but, just as he closed the

door, he noticed an expression in Ellen's countenance, that, had they been alone, and had not he been quite so proud, would have drawn him down to her feet. Their eyes met, when, suddenly, there was a gush of tears into those of Ellen; and a deep sadness, almost despair, spread itself over her features. He paused a moment, and then went his way, equally unable to account for her coldness or for her grief. He was well aware, however, that his situation in respect to her was unaccountably changed, — a conviction so disagreeable, that, but for a hope that is latent even in the despair of youthful hearts, he would have been sorely tempted to shoot himself.

The gloom of his thoughts — a mood of mind the more intolerable to him because so unusual — had driven him to Hugh Crombie's inn in search of artificial excitement. But even the wine had no attractions; and his first glass stood now almost untouched before him, while he gazed in heavy thought into the glowing embers of the fire. His companion perceived his melancholy, and essayed to dispel it by a choice of such topics of conversation as he conceived would be most agreeable.

"There is a lady in the house," he observed. "I caught a glimpse of her in the passage as we came in. Did you see her, Edward?"

"A lady!" repeated Edward carelessly.

"What know you of ladies? No, I did not see her; but I will venture to say that it was Dame Crombie's self, and no other."

"Well, perhaps it might," said the other doubtingly. "Her head was turned from me, and she was gone like a shadow."

"Dame Crombie is no shadow, and never vanishes like one," resumed Edward. "You have mistaken the slipshod servant girl for a lady."

"Ay; but she had a white hand, a small white hand," said the student, piqued at Edward's contemptuous opinion of his powers of observation; "as white as Ellen Langton's." He paused; for the lover was offended by the profanity of the comparison, as was made evident by the blood that rushed to his brow.

"We will appeal to the landlord," said Edward, recovering his equanimity, and turning to Hugh, who just then entered the room. "Who is this angel, mine host, that has taken up her abode in the Hand and Bottle?"

Hugh cast a quick glance from one to another before he answered: "I keep no angels here, gentlemen. Dame Crombie would make the house anything but heaven for them and me."

"And yet Glover has seen a vision in the passageway, — a lady with a small white hand."

"Ah, I understand! A slight mistake of

the young gentleman's," said Hugh, with the air of one who could perfectly account for the mystery. "Our passageway is dark; or perhaps the light had dazzled his eyes. It was the Widow Fowler's daughter, that came to borrow a pipe of tobacco for her mother. By the same token, she put it into her own sweet mouth, and puffed as she went along."

"But the white hand," said Glover, only half convinced.

"Nay, I know not," answered Hugh. "But her hand was at least as white as her face: that I can swear. Well, gentlemen, I trust you find everything in my house to your satisfaction. When the fire needs renewing, or the wine runs low, be pleased to tap on the table. I shall appear with the speed of a sunbeam."

After the departure of the landlord, the conversation of the young men amounted to little more than monosyllables. Edward Walcott was wrapped in his own contemplations; and his companion was in a half-slumberous state, from which he started every quarter of an hour, at the chiming of the clock that stood in a corner. The fire died gradually away; the lamps began to burn dim; and Glover, rousing himself from one of his periodical slumbers, was about to propose a return to their chambers. He was prevented, however, by the approach of footsteps along the passageway; and Hugh Crombie,

opening the door, ushered a person into the room, and retired.

The newcomer was Fanshawe. The water that poured plentifully from his cloak evinced that he had but just arrived at the inn; but, whatever was his object, he seemed not to have attained it in meeting with the young men. He paused near the door, as if meditating whether to retire.

"My intrusion is altogether owing to a mistake, either of the landlord's or mine," he said. "I came hither to seek another person; but, as I could not mention his name, my inquiries were rather vague."

"I thank Heaven for the chance that sent you to us," replied Edward, rousing himself. "Glover is wretched company; and a duller evening have I never spent. We will renew our fire and our wine, and you must sit down with us. And for the man you seek," he continued in a whisper, "he left the inn within a half-hour after we encountered him. I inquired of Hugh Crombie last night."

Fanshawe did not express his doubts of the correctness of the information on which Edward seemed to rely. Laying aside his cloak, he accepted his invitation to make one of the party, and sat down by the fireside.

The aspect of the evening now gradually changed. A strange wild glee spread from one

to another of the party, which, much to the surprise of his companions, began with and was communicated from Fanshawe. He seemed to overflow with conceptions inimitably ludicrous, but so singular, that, till his hearers had imbibed a portion of his own spirit, they could only wonder at, instead of enjoying them. His applications to the wine were very unfrequent; yet his conversation was such as one might expect from a bottle of champagne endowed by a fairy with the gift of speech. The secret of this strange mirth lay in the troubled state of his spirits, which, like the vexed ocean at midnight (if the simile be not too magnificent), tossed forth a mysterious brightness. The undefined apprehensions that had drawn him to the inn still distracted his mind; but, mixed with them, there was a sort of joy not easily to be described. By degrees, and by the assistance of the wine, the inspiration spread, each one contributing such a quantity, and such quality of wit and whim, as was proportioned to his genius; but each one, and all, displaying a greater share of both than they had ever been suspected of possessing.

At length, however, there was a pause,— the deep pause of flagging spirits, that always follows mirth and wine. No one would have believed, on beholding the pensive faces and hearing the involuntary sighs of the party, that

from these, but a moment before, had arisen so loud and wild a laugh. During this interval Edward Walcott (who was the poet of his class) volunteered the following song, which, from its want of polish, and from its application to his present feelings, might charitably be taken for an extemporaneous production: —

The wine is bright, the wine is bright,
And gay the drinkers be:
Of all that drain the bowl to-night,
Most jollily drain we.
O, could one search the weary earth, —
The earth from sea to sea, —
He 'd turn and mingle in our mirth;
For we 're the merriest three.

Yet there are cares, O, heavy cares!
We know that they are nigh:
When forth each lonely drinker fares,
Mark then his altered eye.
Care comes upon us when the jest
And frantic laughter die;
And care will watch the parting guest, —
O late, then let us fly!

Hugh Crombie, whose early love of song and minstrelsy was still alive, had entered the room at the sound of Edward's voice, in sufficient time to accompany the second stanza on the violin. He now, with the air of one who was entitled to judge in these matters, expressed his opinion of the performance.

"Really, Master Walcott, I was not prepared for this," he said, in the tone of condescending praise that a great man uses to his in-

ferior when he chooses to overwhelm him with excess of joy. "Very well, indeed, young gentleman! Some of the lines, it is true, seem to have been dragged in by the head and shoulders; but I could scarcely have done much better myself at your age. With practice, and with such instruction as I might afford you, I should have little doubt of your becoming a distinguished poet. A great defect in your seminary, gentlemen, — the want of due cultivation in this heavenly art."

"Perhaps, sir," said Edward, with much gravity, "you might yourself be prevailed upon to accept the professorship of poetry?"

"Why, such an offer would require consideration," replied the landlord. "Professor Hugh Crombie of Harley College: it has a good sound, assuredly. But I am a public man, Master Walcott; and the public would be loath to spare me from my present office."

"Will Professor Crombie favor us with a specimen of his productions?" inquired Edward.

"Ahem! I shall be happy to gratify you, young gentleman," answered Hugh. "It is seldom, in this rude country, Master Walcott, that we meet with kindred genius; and the opportunity should never be thrown away."

Thus saying, he took a heavy draught of the liquor by which he was usually inspired, and the praises of which were the prevailing subject

of his song ; then, after much hemming, thrumming, and prelusion, and with many queer gestures and gesticulations, he began to effuse a lyric in the following fashion : —

> I 've been a jolly drinker this five-and-twenty year,
> And still a jolly drinker, my friends, you see me here :
> I sing the joys of drinking ; bear a chorus, every man,
> With pint pot and quart pot and clattering of can.

The sense of the professor's first stanza was not in exact proportion to the sound ; but, being executed with great spirit, it attracted universal applause. This Hugh appropriated with a condescending bow and smile ; and, making a signal for silence, he went on : —

> King Solomon of old, boys (a jolly king was he) —

But here he was interrupted by a clapping of hands, that seemed a continuance of the applause bestowed on his former stanza. Hugh Crombie, who, as is the custom of many great performers, usually sang with his eyes shut, now opened them, intending gently to rebuke his auditors for their unseasonable expression of delight. He immediately perceived, however, that the fault was to be attributed to neither of the three young men ; and, following the direction of their eyes, he saw near the door, in the dim background of the apartment, a figure in a cloak. The hat was flapped forward, the cloak muffled round the lower part of the face ; and only the eyes were visible.

The party gazed a moment in silence, and then rushed *en masse* upon the intruder, the landlord bringing up the rear, and sounding a charge upon his fiddle. But, as they drew nigh, the black cloak began to assume a familiar look; the hat, also, was an old acquaintance; and, these being removed, from beneath them shone forth the reverend face and form of Dr. Melmoth.

The president, in his quality of clergyman, had, late in the preceding afternoon, been called to visit an aged female who was supposed to be at the point of death. Her habitation was at the distance of several miles from Harley College; so that it was nightfall before Dr. Melmoth stood at her bedside. His stay had been lengthened beyond his anticipation, on account of the frame of mind in which he found the dying woman; and, after essaying to impart the comforts of religion to her disturbed intellect, he had waited for the abatement of the storm that had arisen while he was thus engaged. As the evening advanced, however, the rain poured down in undiminished cataracts; and the doctor, trusting to the prudence and sure-footedness of his steed, had at length set forth on his return. The darkness of the night and the roughness of the road might have appalled him, even had his horsemanship and his courage been more considerable than they were; but by the special protection of Providence, as he

reasonably supposed (for he was a good man, and on a good errand), he arrived safely as far as Hugh Crombie's inn. Dr. Melmoth had no intention of making a stay there; but, as the road passed within a very short distance, he saw lights in the windows, and heard the sound of song and revelry. It immediately occurred to him, that these midnight rioters were, probably, some of the young men of his charge; and he was impelled, by a sense of duty, to enter and disperse them. Directed by the voices, he found his way, with some difficulty, to the apartment, just as Hugh concluded his first stanza; and, amidst the subsequent applause, his entrance had been unperceived.

There was a silence of a moment's continuance after the discovery of Dr. Melmoth, during which he attempted to clothe his round, good-natured face in a look of awful dignity. But, in spite of himself, there was a little twisting of the corners of his mouth, and a smothered gleam in his eye.

"This has, apparently, been a very merry meeting, young gentlemen," he at length said; "but I fear my presence has cast a damp upon it."

"O yes! your reverence's cloak is wet enough to cast a damp upon anything!" exclaimed Hugh Crombie, assuming a look of tender anxiety. "The young gentlemen are

affrighted for your valuable life. Fear deprives them of utterance; permit me to relieve you of these dangerous garments."

"Trouble not yourself, honest man," replied the doctor, who was one of the most gullible of mortals. "I trust I am in no danger, my dwelling being near at hand. But for these young men" —

"Would your reverence but honor my Sunday suit, — the gray broadcloth coat, and the black velvet smallclothes that have covered my unworthy legs but once? Dame Crombie shall have them ready in a moment," continued Hugh, beginning to divest the doctor of his garments.

"I pray you to appease your anxiety!" cried Dr. Melmoth, retaining a firm hold on such parts of his dress as yet remained to him. "Fear not for my health. I will but speak a word to those misguided youth, and be gone."

"Misguided youth, did your reverence say?" echoed Hugh, in a tone of utter astonishment. "Never were they better guided than when they entered my poor house. O, had your reverence but seen them, when I heard their cries, and rushed forth to their assistance! Dripping with wet were they, like three drowned men at the resurrec— Ahem!" interrupted Hugh, recollecting that the comparison he meditated might not suit the doctor's ideas of propriety.

"But why were they abroad on such a night?" inquired the president.

"Ah! doctor, you little know the love these good young gentlemen bear for you," replied the landlord. "Your absence, your long absence, had alarmed them; and they rushed forth through the rain and darkness to seek you."

"And was this indeed so?" asked the doctor, in a softened tone, and casting a tender and grateful look upon the three students. They, it is but justice to mention, had simultaneously made a step forward in order to contradict the egregious falsehoods of which Hugh's fancy was so fertile; but he assumed an expression of such ludicrous entreaty, that it was irresistible.

"But methinks their anxiety was not of long continuance," observed Dr. Melmoth, looking at the wine, and remembering the song that his entrance had interrupted.

"Ah! your reverence disapproves of the wine, I see," answered Hugh Crombie. "I did but offer them a drop to keep the life in their poor young hearts. My dame advised strong waters. 'But, Dame Crombie,' says I, 'would ye corrupt their youth?' And in my zeal for their good, doctor, I was delighting them, just at your entrance, with a pious little melody of my own against the sin of drunkenness."

"Truly, I remember something of the kind,"

observed Dr. Melmoth. "And, as I think, it seemed to meet with good acceptance."

"Ay, that it did!" said the landlord. "Will it please your reverence to hear it? —

> King Solomon of old, boys (a wise man I 'm thinking),
> Has warned you to beware of the horrid vice of drinking —

But why talk I of drinking, foolish man that I am! And all this time, doctor, you have not sipped a drop of my wine. Now I entreat your reverence, as you value your health and the peace and quiet of these youth."

Dr. Melmoth drank a glass of wine, with the benevolent intention of allaying the anxiety of Hugh Crombie and the students. He then prepared to depart; for a strong wind had partially dispersed the clouds, and occasioned an interval in the cataract of rain. There was, perhaps, a little suspicion yet remaining in the good man's mind respecting the truth of the landlord's story; at least, it was his evident intention to see the students fairly out of the inn before he quitted it himself. They therefore proceeded along the passageway in a body. The lamp that Hugh Crombie held but dimly enlightened them; and the number and contiguity of the doors caused Dr. Melmoth to lay his hand upon the wrong one.

"Not there, not there, doctor! It is Dame Crombie's bedchamber!" shouted Hugh most energetically. "Now Beelzebub defend me!"

he muttered to himself, perceiving that his exclamation had been a moment too late.

"Heavens! what do I see?" ejaculated Dr. Melmoth, lifting his hands, and starting back from the entrance of the room. The three students pressed forward; Mrs. Crombie and the servant girl had been drawn to the spot by the sound of Hugh's voice; and all their wondering eyes were fixed on poor Ellen Langton.

The apartment in the midst of which she stood was dimly lighted by a solitary candle at the farther extremity; but Ellen was exposed to the glare of the three lamps, held by Hugh, his wife, and the servant girl. Their combined rays seemed to form a focus exactly at the point where they reached her; and the beholders, had any been sufficiently calm, might have watched her features in their agitated workings and frequent change of expression, as perfectly as by the broad light of day. Terror had at first blanched her as white as a lily, or as a marble statue, which for a moment she resembled, as she stood motionless in the centre of the room. Shame next bore sway; and her blushing countenance, covered by her slender white fingers, might fantastically be compared to a variegated rose with its alternate stripes of white and red. The next instant, a sense of her pure and innocent intentions gave her strength and courage; and her attitude and look had now some-

thing of pride and dignity. These, however, in their turn, gave way; for Edward Walcott pressed forward, and attempted to address her.

"Ellen, Ellen!" he said, in an agitated and quivering whisper; but what was to follow cannot be known, for his emotion checked his utterance. His tone and look, however, again overcame Ellen Langton, and she burst into tears. Fanshawe advanced, and took Edward's arm. "She has been deceived," he whispered. "She is innocent: you are unworthy of her if you doubt it."

"Why do you interfere, sir?" demanded Edward, whose passions, thoroughly excited, would willingly have wreaked themselves on any one. "What right have you to speak of her innocence? Perhaps," he continued, an undefined and ridiculous suspicion arising in his mind, — "perhaps you are acquainted with her intentions. Perhaps you are the deceiver."

Fanshawe's temper was not naturally of the meekest character; and having had a thousand bitter feelings of his own to overcome, before he could attempt to console Edward, this rude repulse had almost aroused him to fierceness. But his pride, of which a more moderate degree would have had a less peaceable effect, came to his assistance; and he turned calmly and contemptuously away.

Ellen, in the meantime, had been restored to

some degree of composure. To this effect a feeling of pique against Edward Walcott had contributed. She had distinguished his voice in the neighboring apartment, had heard his mirth and wild laughter, without being aware of the state of feeling that produced them. She had supposed that the terms on which they parted in the morning (which had been very grievous to herself) would have produced a corresponding sadness in him. But while she sat in loneliness and in tears, her bosom distracted by a thousand anxieties and sorrows, of many of which Edward was the object, his reckless gayety had seemed to prove the slight regard in which he held her. After the first outbreak of emotion, therefore, she called up her pride (of which, on proper occasions, she had a reasonable share), and sustained his upbraiding glance with a passive composure, which women have more readily at command than men.

Dr. Melmoth's surprise had during this time kept him silent and inactive. He gazed alternately from one to another of those who stood around him, as if to seek some explanation of so strange an event. But the faces of all were as perplexed as his own; even Hugh Crombie had assumed a look of speechless wonder, — speechless, because his imagination, prolific as it was, could not supply a plausible falsehood.

"Ellen, dearest child," at length said the doctor, "what is the meaning of this?"

Ellen endeavored to reply; but, as her composure was merely external, she was unable to render her words audible. Fanshawe spoke in a low voice to Dr. Melmoth, who appeared grateful for his advice.

"True, it will be the better way," he replied. "My wits are utterly confounded, or I should not have remained thus long. Come, my dear child," he continued, advancing to Ellen and taking her hand, "let us return home, and defer the explanation till the morrow. There, there: only dry your eyes, and we will say no more about it."

"And that will be your wisest way, old gentleman," muttered Hugh Crombie.

Ellen at first exhibited but little desire, or rather, an evident reluctance, to accompany her guardian. She hung back, while her glance passed almost imperceptibly over the faces that gazed so eagerly at her; but the one she sought was not visible among them. She had no alternative, and suffered herself to be led from the inn.

Edward Walcott alone remained behind, the most wretched being (at least such was his own opinion) that breathed the vital air. He felt a sinking and sickness of the heart, and alternately a feverish frenzy, neither of which his short and

cloudless existence had heretofore occasioned him to experience. He was jealous of, he knew not whom, and he knew not what. He was ungenerous enough to believe that Ellen — his pure and lovely Ellen — had degraded herself; though from what motive, or by whose agency, he could not conjecture. When Dr. Melmoth had taken her in charge, Edward returned to the apartment where he had spent the evening. The wine was still upon the table; and, in the desperate hope of stupefying his faculties, he unwisely swallowed huge successive draughts. The effect of his imprudence was not long in manifesting itself; though insensibility, which at another time would have been the result, did not now follow. Acting upon his previous agitation, the wine seemed to set his blood in a flame; and, for the time being, he was a perfect madman.

A phrenologist would probably have found the organ of destructiveness in strong development, just then, upon Edward's cranium; for he certainly manifested an impulse to break and destroy whatever chanced to be within his reach. He commenced his operations by upsetting the table, and breaking the bottles and glasses. Then, seizing a tall heavy chair in each hand, he hurled them with prodigious force, — one through the window, and the other against a large looking-glass, the most valuable article of

furniture in Hugh Crombie's inn. The crash and clatter of these outrageous proceedings soon brought the master, mistress, and maid servant to the scene of action; but the two latter, at the first sight of Edward's wild demeanor and gleaming eyes, retreated with all imaginable expedition. Hugh chose a position behind the door, from whence, protruding his head, he endeavored to mollify his inebriated guest. His interference, however, had nearly been productive of most unfortunate consequences; for a massive andiron, with round brazen head, whizzed past him, within a hair's breadth of his ear.

"I might as safely take my chance in a battle!" exclaimed Hugh, withdrawing his head, and speaking to a man who stood in the passageway. "A little twist of his hand to the left would have served my turn as well as if I stood in the path of a forty-two pound ball. And here comes another broadside," he added, as some other article of furniture rattled against the door.

"Let us return his fire, Hugh," said the person whom he addressed, composedly lifting the andiron. "He is in want of ammunition: let us send him back his own."

The sound of this man's voice produced a most singular effect upon Edward. The moment before, his actions had been those of a raving maniac; but, when the words struck his ear, he paused, put his hand to his forehead, seemed

to recollect himself, and finally advanced with a firm and steady step. His countenance was dark and angry, but no longer wild.

"I have found you, villain!" he said to the angler. "It is you who have done this."

"And, having done it, the wrath of a boy — his drunken wrath — will not induce me to deny it," replied the other scornfully.

"The boy will require a man's satisfaction," returned Edward, "and that speedily."

"Will you take it now?" inquired the angler, with a cool, derisive smile, and almost in a whisper. At the same time he produced a brace of pistols, and held them towards the young man.

"Willingly," answered Edward, taking one of the weapons. "Choose your distance."

The angler stepped back a pace; but before their deadly intentions, so suddenly conceived, could be executed, Hugh Crombie interposed himself between them.

"Do you take my best parlor for the cabin of the Black Andrew, where a pistol shot was a nightly pastime?" he inquired of his comrade. "And you, Master Edward, with what sort of a face will you walk into the chapel to morning prayers, after putting a ball through this man's head, or receiving one through your own? Though, in this last case, you will be past praying for, or praying either."

"Stand aside: I will take the risk. Make

way, or I will put the ball through your own head!" exclaimed Edward fiercely; for the interval of rationality that circumstances had produced was again giving way to intoxication.

"You see how it is," said Hugh to his companion, unheard by Edward. "You shall take a shot at me sooner than at the poor lad in his present state. You have done him harm enough already, and intend him more. I propose," he continued aloud, and with a peculiar glance towards the angler, "that this affair be decided to-morrow, at nine o'clock, under the old oak, on the bank of the stream. In the meantime, I will take charge of these popguns, for fear of accidents."

"Well, mine host, be it as you wish," said his comrade. "A shot more or less is of little consequence to me." He accordingly delivered his weapon to Hugh Crombie, and walked carelessly away.

"Come, Master Walcott, the enemy has retreated. Victoria! And now, I see, the sooner I get you to your chamber, the better," added he aside; for the wine was at last beginning to produce its legitimate effect, in stupefying the young man's mental and bodily faculties.

Hugh Crombie's assistance, though not, perhaps, quite indispensable, was certainly very convenient to our unfortunate hero, in the course of the short walk that brought him to his cham-

ber. When arrived there, and in bed, he was soon locked in a sleep scarcely less deep than that of death.

The weather, during the last hour, had appeared to be on the point of changing; indeed, there were, every few minutes, most rapid changes. A strong breeze sometimes drove the clouds from the brow of heaven, so as to disclose a few of the stars; but, immediately after, the darkness would again become Egyptian, and the rain rush like a torrent from the sky.

CHAPTER VI

"About her neck a packet-mail
Fraught with advice, some fresh, some stale,
Of men that walked when they were dead."

HUDIBRAS.

SCARCELY a word had passed between Dr. Melmoth and Ellen Langton, on their way home; for, though the former was aware that his duty towards his ward would compel him to inquire into the motives of her conduct, the tenderness of his heart prompted him to defer the scrutiny to the latest moment. The same tenderness induced him to connive at Ellen's stealing secretly up to her chamber, unseen by Mrs. Melmoth; to render which measure practicable, he opened the house door very softly, and stood before his half-sleeping spouse (who waited his arrival in the parlor) without any previous notice. This act of the doctor's benevolence was not destitute of heroism; for he was well assured that, should the affair come to the lady's knowledge through any other channel, her vengeance would descend not less heavily on him for concealing than on Ellen for perpetrating the elopement. That she had, thus far,

no suspicion of the fact was evident from her composure, as well as from the reply to a question which, with more than his usual art, her husband put to her respecting the non-appearance of his ward. Mrs. Melmoth answered, that Ellen had complained of indisposition, and after drinking, by her prescription, a large cup of herb tea, had retired to her chamber early in the evening. Thankful that all was yet safe, the doctor laid his head upon his pillow; but, late as was the hour, his many anxious thoughts long drove sleep from his eyelids.

The diminution in the quantity of his natural rest did not, however, prevent Dr. Melmoth from rising at his usual hour, which at all seasons of the year was an early one. He found, on descending to the parlor, that breakfast was nearly in readiness; for the lady of the house (and, as a corollary, her servant girl) was not accustomed to await the rising of the sun in order to commence her domestic labors. Ellen Langton, however, who had heretofore assimilated her habits to those of the family, was this morning invisible, — a circumstance imputed by Mrs. Melmoth to her indisposition of the preceding evening, and by the doctor to mortification on account of her elopement and its discovery.

"I think I will step into Ellen's bedcham-

ber," said Mrs. Melmoth, "and inquire how she feels herself. The morning is delightful after the storm, and the air will do her good."

"Had we not better proceed with our breakfast? If the poor child is sleeping, it were a pity to disturb her," observed the doctor; for, besides his sympathy with Ellen's feelings, he was reluctant, as if he were the guilty one, to meet her face.

"Well, be it so. And now sit down, doctor; for the hot cakes are cooling fast. I suppose you will say they are not so good as those Ellen made yesterday morning. I know not how you will bear to part with her, though the thing must soon be."

"It will be a sore trial, doubtless," replied Dr. Melmoth, — "like tearing away a branch that is grafted on an old tree. And yet there will be a satisfaction in delivering her safe into her father's hands."

"A satisfaction for which you may thank me, doctor," observed the lady. "If there had been none but you to look after the poor thing's doings, she would have been enticed away long ere this, for the sake of her money."

Dr. Melmoth's prudence could scarcely restrain a smile at the thought that an elopement, as he had reason to believe, had been plotted, and partly carried into execution, while Ellen was under the sole care of his lady, and had been

frustrated only by his own despised agency. He was not accustomed, however, — nor was this an eligible occasion, — to dispute any of Mrs. Melmoth's claims to superior wisdom.

The breakfast proceeded in silence, or, at least, without any conversation material to the tale. At its conclusion, Mrs. Melmoth was again meditating on the propriety of entering Ellen's chamber; but she was now prevented by an incident that always excited much interest both in herself and her husband.

This was the entrance of the servant, bearing the letters and newspaper, with which, once a fortnight, the mail carrier journeyed up the valley. Dr. Melmoth's situation at the head of a respectable seminary, and his character as a scholar, had procured him an extensive correspondence among the learned men of his own country; and he had even exchanged epistles with one or two of the most distinguished dissenting clergymen of Great Britain. But, unless when some fond mother enclosed a one-pound note to defray the private expenses of her son at college, it was frequently the case that the packets addressed to the doctor were the sole contents of the mail bag. In the present instance, his letters were very numerous, and, to judge from the one he chanced first to open, of an unconscionable length. While he was engaged in their perusal, Mrs. Melmoth amused

herself with the newspaper, — a little sheet of about twelve inches square, which had but one rival in the country. Commencing with the title, she labored on through advertisements old and new, through poetry lamentably deficient in rhythm and rhymes, through essays, the ideas of which had been trite since the first week of the creation, till she finally arrived at the department that, a fortnight before, had contained the latest news from all quarters. Making such remarks upon these items as to her seemed good, the dame's notice was at length attracted by an article which her sudden exclamation proved to possess uncommon interest. Casting her eye hastily over it, she immediately began to read aloud to her husband; but he, deeply engaged in a long and learned letter, instead of listening to what she wished to communicate, exerted his own lungs in opposition to hers, as is the custom of abstracted men when disturbed. The result was as follows: —

"A brig just arrived in the outer harbor," began Mrs. Melmoth, "reports, that on the morning of the 25th ult." — Here the doctor broke in, "Wherefore I am compelled to differ from your exposition of the said passage, for those reasons, of the which I have given you a taste; provided" — The lady's voice was now almost audible — "ship bottom upward, discovered by the name on her stern to be the Ellen of" —

"and in the same opinion are Hooker, Cotton, and divers learned divines of a later date."

The doctor's lungs were deep and strong, and victory seemed to incline toward him; but Mrs. Melmoth now made use of a tone whose peculiar shrillness, as long experience had taught her husband, augured a mood of mind not to be trifled with.

"On my word, doctor," she exclaimed, "this is most unfeeling and unchristian conduct! Here am I endeavoring to inform you of the death of an old friend, and you continue as deaf as a post."

Dr. Melmoth, who had heard the sound, without receiving the sense, of these words, now laid aside the letter in despair, and submissively requested to be informed of her pleasure.

"There, read for yourself," she replied, handing him the paper, and pointing to the passage containing the important intelligence, — "read, and then finish your letter, if you have a mind."

He took the paper, unable to conjecture how the dame could be so much interested in any part of its contents; but, before he had read many words, he grew pale as death. "Good heavens! what is this?" he exclaimed. He then read on — "being the vessel wherein that eminent son of New England, John Langton, Esq., had taken passage for his native country, after an absence of many years."

"Our poor Ellen, his orphan child!" said Dr. Melmoth, dropping the paper. "How shall we break the intelligence to her? Alas! her share of the affliction causes me to forget my own."

"It is a heavy misfortune, doubtless; and Ellen will grieve as a daughter should," replied Mrs. Melmoth, speaking with the good sense of which she had a competent share. "But she has never known her father; and her sorrow must arise from a sense of duty more than from strong affection. I will go and inform her of her loss. It is late, and I wonder if she be still asleep."

"Be cautious, dearest wife," said the doctor. "Ellen has strong feelings, and a sudden shock might be dangerous."

"I think I may be trusted, Dr. Melmoth," replied the lady, who had a high opinion of her own abilities as a comforter, and was not averse to exercise them.

Her husband, after her departure, sat listlessly turning over the letters that yet remained unopened, feeling little curiosity, after such melancholy intelligence, respecting their contents. But, by the handwriting of the direction on one of them, his attention was gradually arrested, till he found himself gazing earnestly on those strong, firm, regular characters. They were perfectly familiar to his eye; but from what hand

they came he could not conjecture. Suddenly, however, the truth burst upon him; and, after noticing the date and reading a few lines, he rushed hastily in pursuit of his wife.

He had arrived at the top of his speed and at the middle of the staircase, when his course was arrested by the lady whom he sought, who came, with a velocity equal to his own, in an opposite direction. The consequence was a concussion between the two meeting masses, by which Mrs. Melmoth was seated securely on the stairs, while the doctor was only preserved from precipitation to the bottom by clinging desperately to the balustrade. As soon as the pair discovered that they had sustained no material injury by their contact, they began eagerly to explain the cause of their mutual haste, without those reproaches, which, on the lady's part, would at another time have followed such an accident.

"You have not told her the bad news, I trust?" cried Dr. Melmoth, after each had communicated his and her intelligence, without obtaining audience of the other.

"Would you have me tell it to the bare walls?" inquired the lady, in her shrillest tone. "Have I not just informed you that she has gone, fled, eloped? Her chamber is empty, and her bed has not been occupied."

"Gone!" repeated the doctor. "And, when

her father comes to demand his daughter of me, what answer shall I make?"

"Now, Heaven defend us from the visits of the dead and drowned!" cried Mrs. Melmoth. "This is a serious affair, doctor, but not, I trust, sufficient to raise a ghost."

"Mr. Langton is yet no ghost," answered he; "though this event will go near to make him one. He was fortunately prevented, after he had made every preparation, from taking passage in the vessel that was lost."

"And where is he now?" she inquired.

"He is in New England. Perhaps he is at this moment on his way to us," replied her husband. "His letter is dated nearly a fortnight back; and he expresses an intention of being with us in a few days."

"Well, I thank Heaven for his safety," said Mrs. Melmoth. "But truly the poor gentleman could not have chosen a better time to be drowned, nor a worse one to come to life, than this. What we shall do, doctor, I know not; but had you locked the doors and fastened the windows, as I advised, the misfortune could not have happened."

"Why, the whole country would have flouted us!" answered the doctor. "Is there a door in all the Province that is barred or bolted, night or day? Nevertheless, it might have been advisable last night, had it occurred to me."

"And why at that time more than at all times?" she inquired. "We had surely no reason to fear this event."

Dr. Melmoth was silent; for his worldly wisdom was sufficient to deter him from giving his lady the opportunity, which she would not fail to use to the utmost, of laying the blame of the elopement at his door. He now proceeded, with a heavy heart, to Ellen's chamber, to satisfy himself with his own eyes of the state of affairs. It was deserted too truly; and the wild flowers with which it was the maiden's custom daily to decorate her premises were drooping, as if in sorrow for her who had placed them there. Mrs. Melmoth, on this second visit, discovered on the table a note addressed to her husband, and containing a few words of gratitude from Ellen, but no explanation of her mysterious flight. The doctor gazed long on the tiny letters, which had evidently been traced with a trembling hand, and blotted with many tears.

"There is a mystery in this, — a mystery that I cannot fathom," he said. "And now I would I knew what measures it would be proper to take."

"Get you on horseback, Dr. Melmoth, and proceed as speedily as may be down the valley to the town," said the dame, the influence of whose firmer mind was sometimes, as in the present case, most beneficially exerted over his

own. "You must not spare for trouble, — no, nor for danger. Now — O, if I were a man!"

"O that you were!" murmured the doctor, in a perfectly inaudible voice. "Well — and when I reach the town, what then?"

"As I am a Christian woman, my patience cannot endure you!" exclaimed Mrs. Melmoth. "O, I love to see a man with the spirit of a man! but you" — And she turned away in utter scorn.

"But, dearest wife," remonstrated the husband, who was really at a loss how to proceed, and anxious for her advice, "your worldly experience is greater than mine, and I desire to profit by it. What should be my next measure after arriving at the town?"

Mrs. Melmoth was appeased by the submission with which the doctor asked her counsel; though, if the truth must be told, she heartily despised him for needing it. She condescended, however, to instruct him in the proper method of pursuing the runaway maiden, and directed him, before his departure, to put strict inquiries to Hugh Crombie respecting any stranger who might lately have visited his inn. That there would be wisdom in this Dr. Melmoth had his own reasons for believing; and still, without imparting them to his lady, he proceeded to do as he had been bid.

The veracious landlord acknowleged that a

stranger had spent a night and day at his inn, and was missing that morning; but he utterly denied all acquaintance with his character, or privity to his purposes. Had Mrs. Melmoth, instead of her husband, conducted the examination, the result might have been different. As the case was, the doctor returned to his dwelling but little wiser than he went forth; and, ordering his steed to be saddled, he began a journey of which he knew not what would be the end.

In the meantime, the intelligence of Ellen's disappearance circulated rapidly, and soon sent forth hunters more fit to follow the chase than Dr. Melmoth.

CHAPTER VII

"There was racing and chasing o'er Cannobie Lee."
WALTER SCOTT.

WHEN Edward Walcott awoke the next morning from his deep slumber, his first consciousness was of a heavy weight upon his mind, the cause of which he was unable immediately to recollect. One by one, however, by means of the association of ideas, the events of the preceding night came back to his memory; though those of latest occurrence were dim as dreams. But one circumstance was only too well remembered, — the discovery of Ellen Langton. By a strong effort he next attained to an uncertain recollection of a scene of madness and violence, followed, as he at first thought, by a duel. A little further reflection, however, informed him that this event was yet among the things of futurity; but he could by no means recall the appointed time or place. As he had not the slightest intention (praiseworthy and prudent as it would unquestionably have been) to give up the chance of avenging Ellen's wrongs and his own, he immediately arose, and began to dress, meaning to learn from Hugh Crombie those particulars

which his own memory had not retained. His chief apprehension was, that the appointed time had already elapsed; for the early sunbeams of a glorious morning were now peeping into his chamber.

More than once, during the progress of dressing, he was inclined to believe that the duel had actually taken place, and been fatal to him, and that he was now in those regions to which, his conscience told him, such an event would be likely to send him. This idea resulted from his bodily sensations, which were in the highest degree uncomfortable. He was tormented by a raging thirst, that seemed to have absorbed all the moisture of his throat and stomach; and, in his present agitation, a cup of icy water would have been his first wish, had all the treasures of earth and sea been at his command. His head, too, throbbed almost to bursting; and the whirl of his brain at every movement promised little accuracy in the aim of his pistol, when he should meet the angler. These feelings, together with the deep degradation of his mind, made him resolve that no circumstances should again draw him into an excess of wine. In the meantime, his head was, perhaps, still too much confused to allow him fully to realize his unpleasant situation.

Before Edward was prepared to leave his chamber, the door was opened by one of the

college bedmakers, who, perceiving that he was nearly dressed, entered, and began to set the apartment in order. There were two of these officials pertaining to Harley College, each of them being (and, for obvious reasons, this was an indispensable qualification) a model of perfect ugliness in her own way. One was a tall, raw-boned, huge-jointed, double-fisted giantess, admirably fitted to sustain the part of Glumdalia, in the tragedy of Tom Thumb. Her features were as excellent as her form, appearing to have been rough-hewn with a broadaxe, and left unpolished. The other was a short, squat figure, about two thirds the height, and three times the circumference, of ordinary females. Her hair was gray, her complexion of a deep yellow; and her most remarkable feature was a short snub nose, just discernible amid the broad immensity of her face. This latter lady was she who now entered Edward's chamber. Notwithstanding her deficiency in personal attractions, she was rather a favorite of the students, being good-natured, anxious for their comfort, and, when duly encouraged, very communicative. Edward perceived, as soon as she appeared, that she only waited his assistance in order to disburden herself of some extraordinary information; and, more from compassion than curiosity, he began to question her.

"Well, Dolly, what news this morning?"

"Why, let me see, — O yes! It had almost slipped my memory," replied the bedmaker. "Poor Widow Butler died last night, after her long sickness. Poor woman! I remember her forty years ago, or so, — as rosy a lass as you could set eyes on."

"Ah! has she gone?" said Edward, recollecting the sick woman of the cottage which he had entered with Ellen and Fanshawe. "Was she not out of her right mind, Dolly?"

"Yes, this seven years," she answered. "They say she came to her senses a bit, when Dr. Melmoth visited her yesterday, but was raving mad when she died. Ah, that son of hers! — if he is yet alive. Well, well!"

"She had a son, then?" inquired Edward.

"Yes, such as he was. The Lord preserve me from such a one!" said Dolly. "It was thought he went off with Hugh Crombie, that keeps the tavern now. That was fifteen years ago."

"And have they heard nothing of him since?" asked Edward.

"Nothing good, — nothing good," said the bedmaker. "Stories did travel up the valley now and then; but for five years there has been no word of him. They say Merchant Langton, Ellen's father, met him in foreign parts, and would have made a man of him; but there was too much of the wicked one in him for that.

Well, poor woman! I wonder who 'll preach her funeral sermon?"

"Dr. Melmoth, probably," observed the student.

"No, no! The doctor will never finish his journey in time. And who knows but his own funeral will be the end of it!" said Dolly, with a sagacious shake of her head.

"Dr. Melmoth gone a journey!" repeated Edward. "What do you mean? For what purpose?"

"For a good purpose enough, I may say," replied she. "To search out Miss Ellen, that was run away with last night."

"In the Devil's name, woman, of what are you speaking?" shouted Edward, seizing the affrighted bedmaker forcibly by the arm.

Poor Dolly had chosen this circuitous method of communicating her intelligence, because she was well aware that, if she first told of Ellen's flight, she should find no ear for her account of the Widow Butler's death. She had not calculated, however, that the news would produce so violent an effect upon her auditor; and her voice faltered as she recounted what she knew of the affair. She had hardly concluded, before Edward — who, as she proceeded, had been making hasty preparations — rushed from his chamber, and took the way towards Hugh Crombie's inn. He had no difficulty in finding the landlord, who

had already occupied his accustomed seat, and was smoking his accustomed pipe, under the elm-tree.

"Well, Master Walcott, you have come to take a stomach reliever this morning, I suppose," said Hugh, taking the pipe from his mouth. "What shall it be? — a bumper of wine with an egg? or a glass of smooth, old, oily brandy, such as Dame Crombie and I keep for our own drinking? Come, that will do it, I know."

"No, no! neither," replied Edward, shuddering involuntarily at the bare mention of wine and strong drink. "You know well, Hugh Crombie, the errand on which I come."

"Well, perhaps I do," said the landlord. "You come to order me to saddle my best horse. You are for a ride, this fine morning."

"True; and I must learn of you in what direction to turn my horse's head," replied Edward Walcott.

"I understand you," said Hugh, nodding and smiling. "And now, Master Edward, I really have taken a strong liking to you; and, if you please to hearken to it, you shall have some of my best advice."

"Speak," said the young man, expecting to be told in what direction to pursue the chase.

"I advise you, then," continued Hugh Crombie, in a tone in which some real feeling min-

gled with assumed carelessness, — "I advise you to forget that you have ever known this girl, that she has ever existed; for she is as much lost to you as if she never had been born, or as if the grave had covered her. Come, come, man, toss off a quart of my old wine, and keep up a merry heart. This has been my way in many a heavier sorrow than ever you have felt: and you see I am alive and merry yet." But Hugh's merriment had failed him just as he was making his boast of it; for Edward saw a tear in the corner of his eye.

"Forget her? Never, never!" said the student, while his heart sank within him at the hopelessness of pursuit which Hugh's words implied. "I will follow her to the ends of the earth."

"Then so much the worse for you and for my poor nag, on whose back you shall be in three minutes," rejoined the landlord. "I have spoken to you as I would to my own son, if I had such an incumbrance. — Here, you ragamuffin! saddle the gray, and lead him round to the door."

"The gray? I will ride the black," said Edward. "I know your best horse as well as you do yourself, Hugh."

"There is no black horse in my stable. I have parted with him to an old comrade of mine," answered the landlord, with a wink of

acknowledgment to what he saw were Edward's suspicions. "The gray is a stout nag, and will carry you a round pace, though not so fast as to bring you up with them you seek. I reserved him for you, and put Mr. Fanshawe off with the old white, on which I travelled hitherward a year or two since."

"Fanshawe! Has he, then, the start of me?" asked Edward.

"He rode off about twenty minutes ago," replied Hugh; "but you will overtake him within ten miles, at farthest. But, if mortal man could recover the girl, that fellow would do it, even if he had no better nag than a broomstick, like the witches of old times."

"Did he obtain any information from you as to the course?" inquired the student.

"I could give him only this much," said Hugh, pointing down the road in the direction of the town. "My old comrade trusts no man further than is needful, and I ask no unnecessary questions."

The hostler now led up to the door the horse which Edward was to ride. The young man mounted with all expedition; but, as he was about to apply the spurs, his thirst, which the bedmaker's intelligence had caused him to forget, returned most powerfully upon him.

"For Heaven's sake, Hugh, a mug of your sharpest cider! and let it be a large one!" he

exclaimed. "My tongue rattles in my mouth like" —

"Like the bones in a dice box," said the landlord, finishing the comparison, and hastening to obey Edward's directions. Indeed, he rather exceeded them, by mingling with the juice of the apple a gill of his old brandy, which his own experience told him would at that time have a most desirable effect upon the young man's internal system.

"It is powerful stuff, mine host; and I feel like a new man already," observed Edward, after draining the mug to the bottom.

"He is a fine lad, and sits his horse most gallantly," said Hugh Crombie to himself, as the student rode off. "I heartily wish him success. I wish to Heaven my conscience had suffered me to betray the plot before it was too late. Well, well, a man must keep his mite of honesty."

The morning was now one of the most bright and glorious that ever shone for mortals; and, under other circumstances, Edward's bosom would have been as light, and his spirit would have sung as cheerfully, as one of the many birds that warbled around him. The raindrops of the preceding night hung like glittering diamonds on every leaf of every tree, shaken, and rendered more brilliant, by occasional sighs of wind, that removed from the traveller the su-

perfluous heat of an unclouded sun. In spite of the adventure, so mysterious and vexatious, in which he was engaged, Edward's elastic spirit (assisted, perhaps, by the brandy he had unwittingly swallowed) rose higher as he rode on; and he soon found himself endeavoring to accommodate the tune of one of Hugh Crombie's ballads to the motion of the horse. Nor did this reviving cheerfulness argue anything against his unwavering faith, and pure and fervent love for Ellen Langton. A sorrowful and repining disposition is not the necessary accompaniment of a "leal and loving heart;" and Edward's spirits were cheered, not by forgetfulness, but by hope, which would not permit him to doubt of the ultimate success of his pursuit. The uncertainty itself, and the probable danger of the expedition, were not without their charm to a youthful and adventurous spirit. In fact, Edward would not have been altogether satisfied to recover the errant damsel, without first doing battle in her behalf.

He had proceeded but a few miles before he came in sight of Fanshawe, who had been accommodated by the landlord with a horse much inferior to his own. The speed to which he had been put had almost exhausted the poor animal, whose best pace was now but little beyond a walk. Edward drew his bridle as he came up with Fanshawe.

"I have been anxious to apologize," he said to him, "for the hasty and unjust expressions of which I made use last evening. May I hope that, in consideration of my mental distraction and the causes of it, you will forget what has passed?"

"I had already forgotten it," replied Fanshawe, freely offering his hand. "I saw your disturbed state of feeling, and it would have been unjust both to you and to myself to remember the errors it occasioned."

"A wild expedition this," observed Edward, after shaking warmly the offered hand. "Unless we obtain some further information at the town, we shall hardly know which way to continue the pursuit."

"We can scarcely fail, I think, of lighting upon some trace of them," said Fanshawe. "Their flight must have commenced after the storm subsided, which would give them but a few hours the start of us. May I beg," he continued, noticing the superior condition of his rival's horse, "that you will not attempt to accommodate your pace to mine?"

Edward bowed, and rode on, wondering at the change which a few months had wrought in Fanshawe's character. On this occasion, especially, the energy of his mind had communicated itself to his frame. The color was strong and high in his cheek, and his whole appearance was that of

a gallant and manly youth, whom a lady might love, or a foe might fear. Edward had not been so slow as his mistress in discovering the student's affection; and he could not but acknowledge in his heart that he was a rival not to be despised, and might yet be a successful one, if, by his means, Ellen Langton were restored to her friends. This consideration caused him to spur forward with increased ardor; but all his speed could not divest him of the idea that Fanshawe would finally overtake him, and attain the object of their mutual pursuit. There was certainly no apparent ground for this imagination; for every step of his horse increased the advantage which Edward had gained, and he soon lost sight of his rival.

Shortly after overtaking Fanshawe, the young man passed the lonely cottage formerly the residence of the Widow Butler, who now lay dead within. He was at first inclined to alight, and make inquiries respecting the fugitives; for he observed through the windows the faces of several persons, whom curiosity, or some better feeling, had led to the house of mourning. Recollecting, however, that this portion of the road must have been passed by the angler and Ellen at too early an hour to attract notice, he forbore to waste time by a fruitless delay.

Edward proceeded on his journey, meeting with no other noticeable event, till, arriving at

the summit of a hill, he beheld, a few hundred yards before him, the Rev. Dr. Melmoth. The worthy president was toiling onward at a rate unexampled in the history either of himself or his steed; the excellence of the latter consisting in sure-footedness rather than rapidity. The rider looked round, seemingly in some apprehension at the sound of hoof-tramps behind him, but was unable to conceal his satisfaction on recognizing Edward Walcott.

In the whole course of his life, Dr. Melmoth had never been placed in circumstances so embarrassing as the present. He was altogether a child in the ways of the world, having spent his youth and early manhood in abstracted study, and his maturity in the solitude of these hills. The expedition, therefore, on which fate had now thrust him, was an entire deviation from the quiet pathway of all his former years; and he felt like one who sets forth over the broad ocean without chart or compass. The affair would undoubtedly have been perplexing to a man of far more experience than he; but the doctor pictured to himself a thousand difficulties and dangers, which, except in his imagination, had no existence. The perturbation of his spirit had compelled him, more than once since his departure, to regret that he had not invited Mrs. Melmoth to a share in the adventure; this being an occasion where her firmness, decision, and confident

sagacity — which made her a sort of domestic hedgehog — would have been peculiarly appropriate. In the absence of such a counsellor, even Edward Walcott — young as he was, and indiscreet as the doctor thought him — was a substitute not to be despised; and it was singular and rather ludicrous to observe how the gray-haired man unconsciously became as a child to the beardless youth. He addressed Edward with an assumption of dignity, through which his pleasure at the meeting was very obvious.

"Young gentleman, this is not well," he said. "By what authority have you absented yourself from the walls of Alma Mater during term time?"

"I conceived that it was unnecessary to ask leave at such a conjuncture, and when the head of the institution was himself in the saddle," replied Edward.

"It was a fault, it was a fault," said Dr. Melmoth, shaking his head; "but, in consideration of the motive, I may pass it over. And now, my dear Edward, I advise that we continue our journey together, as your youth and inexperience will stand in need of the wisdom of my gray head. Nay, I pray you lay not the lash to your steed. You have ridden fast and far; and a slower pace is requisite for a season."

And, in order to keep up with his young companion, the doctor smote his own gray nag;

which unhappy beast, wondering what strange concatenation of events had procured him such treatment, endeavored to obey his master's wishes. Edward had sufficient compassion for Dr. Melmoth (especially as his own horse now exhibited signs of weariness) to moderate his pace to one attainable by the former.

"Alas, youth! these are strange times," observed the president, "when a doctor of divinity and an undergraduate set forth, like a knight-errant and his squire, in search of a stray damsel. Methinks I am an epitome of the church militant, or a new species of polemical divinity. Pray Heaven, however, there be no encounter in store for us; for I utterly forgot to provide myself with weapons."

"I took some thought for that matter, reverend knight," replied Edward, whose imagination was highly tickled by Dr. Melmoth's chivalrous comparison.

"Ay, I see that you have girded on a sword," said the divine. "But wherewith shall I defend myself, my hand being empty, except of this golden-headed staff, the gift of Mr. Langton?"

"One of these, if you will accept it," answered Edward, exhibiting a brace of pistols, "will serve to begin the conflict, before you join the battle hand to hand."

"Nay, I shall find little safety in meddling with that deadly instrument, since I know not

accurately from which end proceeds the bullet," said Dr. Melmoth. "But were it not better, seeing we are so well provided with artillery, to betake ourselves, in the event of an encounter, to some stone wall or other place of strength?"

"If I may presume to advise," said the squire, "you, as being most valiant and experienced, should ride forward, lance in hand (your long staff serving for a lance), while I annoy the enemy from afar."

"Like Teucer behind the shield of Ajax," interrupted Dr. Melmoth, "or David with his stone and sling. No, no, young man! I have left unfinished in my study a learned treatise, important not only to the present age, but to posterity, for whose sakes I must take heed to my safety. — But, lo! who ride yonder?" he exclaimed, in manifest alarm, pointing to some horsemen upon the brow of a hill at a short distance before them.

"Fear not, gallant leader," said Edward Walcott, who had already discovered the objects of the doctor's terror. "They are men of peace, as we shall shortly see. The foremost is somewhere near your own years, and rides like a grave, substantial citizen, — though what he does here I know not. Behind come two servants, men likewise of sober age and pacific appearance."

"Truly your eyes are better than mine own.

Of a verity, you are in the right," acquiesced Dr. Melmoth, recovering his usual quantum of intrepidity. "We will ride forward courageously, as those who, in a just cause, fear neither death nor bonds."

The reverend knight-errant and his squire, at the time of discovering the three horsemen, were within a very short distance of the town, which was, however, concealed from their view by the hill that the strangers were descending. The road from Harley College, through almost its whole extent, had been rough and wild, and the country thin of population; but now, standing frequent, amid fertile fields on each side of the way, were neat little cottages, from which groups of white-headed children rushed forth to gaze upon the travellers. The three strangers, as well as the doctor and Edward, were surrounded, as they approached each other, by a crowd of this kind, plying their little bare legs most pertinaciously in order to keep pace with the horses.

As Edward gained a nearer view of the foremost rider, his grave aspect and stately demeanor struck him with involuntary respect. There were deep lines of thought across his brow; and his calm yet bright gray eye betokened a steadfast soul. There was also an air of conscious importance, even in the manner in which the stranger sat his horse, which a man's

good opinion of himself, unassisted by the concurrence of the world in general, seldom bestows. The two servants rode at a respectable distance in the rear; and the heavy portmanteaus at their backs intimated that the party had journeyed from afar. Dr. Melmoth endeavored to assume the dignity that became him as the head of Harley College; and, with a gentle stroke of his staff upon his wearied steed and a grave nod to the principal stranger, was about to commence the ascent of the hill at the foot of which they were. The gentleman, however, made a halt.

"Dr. Melmoth, am I so fortunate as to meet you?" he exclaimed, in accents expressive of as much surprise and pleasure as were consistent with his staid demeanor. "Have you, then, forgotten your old friend?"

"Mr. Langton! Can it be?" said the doctor, after looking him in the face a moment. "Yes, it is my old friend indeed: welcome, welcome! though you come at an unfortunate time."

"What say you? How is my child? Ellen, I trust, is well?" cried Mr. Langton, a father's anxiety overcoming the coldness and reserve that were natural to him, or that long habit had made a second nature.

"She is well in health. She was so, at least, last night," replied Dr. Melmoth, unable to

meet the eye of his friend. "But — but I have been a careless shepherd; and the lamb has strayed from the fold while I slept."

Edward Walcott, who was a deeply interested observer of this scene, had anticipated that a burst of passionate grief would follow the disclosure. He was, however, altogether mistaken. There was a momentary convulsion of Mr. Langton's strong features, as quick to come and go as a flash of lightning; and then his countenance was as composed — though, perhaps, a little sterner — as before. He seemed about to inquire into the particulars of what so nearly concerned him, but changed his purpose on observing the crowd of children, who, with one or two of their parents, were endeavoring to catch the words that passed between the doctor and himself.

"I will turn back with you to the village," he said, in a steady voice; "and at your leisure I shall desire to hear the particulars of this unfortunate affair."

He wheeled his horse, accordingly, and, side by side with Dr. Melmoth, began to ascend the hill. On reaching the summit, the little country town lay before them, presenting a cheerful and busy spectacle. It consisted of one long, regular street, extending parallel to, and at a short distance from, the river; which here, enlarged by a junction with another stream,

became navigable, — not indeed for vessels of burden, but for rafts of lumber and boats of considerable size. The houses, with peaked roofs and jutting stories, stood at wide intervals along the street; and the commercial character of the place was manifested by the shop door and windows that occupied the front of almost every dwelling. One or two mansions, however, surrounded by trees, and standing back at a haughty distance from the road, were evidently the abodes of the aristocracy of the village. It was not difficult to distinguish the owners of these — self-important personages, with canes and well-powdered periwigs — among the crowd of meaner men who bestowed their attention upon Dr. Melmoth and his friend as they rode by. The town being the nearest mart of a large extent of back country, there were many rough farmers and woodsmen, to whom the cavalcade was an object of curiosity and admiration. The former feeling, indeed, was general throughout the village. The shopkeepers left their customers, and looked forth from the doors; the female portion of the community thrust their heads from the windows; and the people in the street formed a lane through which, with all eyes concentrated upon them, the party rode onward to the tavern. The general aptitude that pervades the populace of a small country town to meddle with affairs not

legitimately concerning them was increased, on this occasion, by the sudden return of Mr. Langton after passing through the village. Many conjectures were afloat respecting the cause of this retrograde movement ; and, by degrees, something like the truth, though much distorted, spread generally among the crowd, communicated, probably, from Mr. Langton's servants. Edward Walcott, incensed at the uncourteous curiosity of which he, as well as his companions, was the object, felt a frequent impulse (though, fortunately for himself, resisted) to make use of his riding switch in clearing a passage.

On arriving at the tavern, Dr. Melmoth recounted to his friend the little he knew beyond the bare fact of Ellen's disappearance. Had Edward Walcott been called to their conference, he might, by disclosing the adventure of the angler, have thrown a portion of light upon the affair ; but, since his first introduction, the cold and stately merchant had honored him with no sort of notice.

Edward, on his part, was not well pleased at the sudden appearance of Ellen's father, and was little inclined to coöperate in any measures that he might adopt for her recovery. It was his wish to pursue the chase on his own responsibility, and as his own wisdom dictated : he chose to be an independent ally, rather than a

subordinate assistant. But, as a step preliminary to his proceedings of every other kind, he found it absolutely necessary, having journeyed far, and fasting, to call upon the landlord for a supply of food. The viands that were set before him were homely, but abundant; nor were Edward's griefs and perplexities so absorbing as to overcome the appetite of youth and health.

Dr. Melmoth and Mr. Langton, after a short private conversation, had summoned the landlord, in the hope of obtaining some clue to the development of the mystery. But no young lady, nor any stranger answering to the description the doctor had received from Hugh Crombie (which was indeed a false one), had been seen to pass through the village since daybreak. Here, therefore, the friends were entirely at a loss in what direction to continue the pursuit. The village was the focus of several roads, diverging to widely distant portions of the country; and which of these the fugitives had taken, it was impossible to determine. One point, however, might be considered certain, — that the village was the first stage of their flight; for it commanded the only outlet from the valley, except a rugged path among the hills, utterly impassable by horse. In this dilemma, expresses were sent by each of the different roads; and poor Ellen's imprudence — the tale nowise decreas-

ing as it rolled along — became known to a wide extent of country. Having thus done everything in his power to recover his daughter, the merchant exhibited a composure which Dr. Melmoth admired, but could not equal. His own mind, however, was in a far more comfortable state than when the responsibility of the pursuit had rested upon himself.

Edward Walcott, in the meantime, had employed but a very few moments in satisfying his hunger; after which his active intellect alternately formed and relinquished a thousand plans for the recovery of Ellen. Fanshawe's observation, that her flight must have commenced after the subsiding of the storm, recurred to him. On inquiry, he was informed that the violence of the rain had continued, with a few momentary intermissions, till near daylight. The fugitives must, therefore, have passed through the village long after its inhabitants were abroad; and how, without the gift of invisibility, they had contrived to elude notice, Edward could not conceive.

"Fifty years ago," thought Edward, "my sweet Ellen would have been deemed a witch for this trackless journey. Truly, I could wish I were a wizard, that I might bestride a broomstick, and follow her."

While the young man, involved in these perplexing thoughts, looked forth from the open

window of the apartment, his attention was drawn to an individual, evidently of a different, though not of a higher class than the countrymen among whom he stood. Edward now recollected that he had noticed his rough dark face among the most earnest of those who had watched the arrival of the party. He had then taken him for one of the boatmen, of whom there were many in the village, and who had much of a sailor-like dress and appearance. A second and more attentive observation, however, convinced Edward that this man's life had not been spent upon fresh water; and, had any stronger evidence than the nameless marks which the ocean impresses upon its sons been necessary, it would have been found in his mode of locomotion. While Edward was observing him, he beat slowly up to one of Mr. Langton's servants, who was standing near the door of the inn. He seemed to question the man with affected carelessness; but his countenance was dark and perplexed when he turned to mingle again with the crowd. Edward lost no time in ascertaining from the servant the nature of his inquiries. They had related to the elopement of Mr. Langton's daughter, which was, indeed, the prevailing, if not the sole subject of conversation in the village.

The grounds for supposing that this man was in any way connected with the angler were,

perhaps, very slight; yet, in the perplexity of the whole affair, they induced Edward to resolve to get at the heart of his mystery. To attain this end, he took the most direct method, — by applying to the man himself.

He had now retired apart from the throng and bustle of the village, and was seated upon a condemned boat, that was drawn up to rot upon the banks of the river. His arms were folded, and his hat drawn over his brows. The lower part of his face, which alone was visible, evinced gloom and depression, as did also the deep sighs, which, because he thought no one was near him, he did not attempt to restrain.

"Friend, I must speak with you," said Edward Walcott, laying his hand upon his shoulder, after contemplating the man a moment, himself unseen.

He started at once from his abstraction and his seat, apparently expecting violence, and prepared to resist it; but, perceiving the youthful and solitary intruder upon his privacy, he composed his features with much quickness.

"What would you with me?" he asked.

"They tarry long, — or you have kept a careless watch," said Edward, speaking at a venture.

For a moment, there seemed a probability of obtaining such a reply to this observation as the youth had intended to elicit. If any trust

could be put in the language of the stranger's countenance, a set of words different from those to which he subsequently gave utterance had risen to his lips. But he seemed naturally slow of speech; and this defect was now, as is frequently the case, advantageous in giving him space for reflection.

"Look you, youngster: crack no jokes on me," he at length said contemptuously. "Away! back whence you came, or" — And he slightly waved a small rattan that he held in his right hand.

Edward's eyes sparkled, and his color rose. "You must change this tone, fellow, and that speedily," he observed. "I order you to lower your hand, and answer the questions that I shall put to you."

The man gazed dubiously at him, but finally adopted a more conciliatory mode of speech.

"Well, master; and what is your business with me?" he inquired. "I am a boatman out of employ. Any commands in my line?"

"Pshaw! I know you, my good friend, and you cannot deceive me," replied Edward Walcott. "We are private here," he continued, looking around. "I have no desire or intention to do you harm; and, if you act according to my directions, you shall have no cause to repent it."

"And what if I refuse to put myself under

your orders?" inquired the man. "You are but a young captain for such an old hulk as mine."

"The ill consequences of a refusal would all be on your own side," replied Edward. "I shall, in that case, deliver you up to justice: if I have not the means of capturing you myself," he continued, observing the seaman's eye to wander rather scornfully over his youthful and slender figure, "there are hundreds within call whom it will be in vain to resist. Besides, it requires little strength to use this," he added, laying his hand on a pistol.

"If that were all, I could suit you there, my lad," muttered the stranger. He continued aloud: "Well, what is your will with me? D——d ungenteel treatment this! But put your questions; and, to oblige you, I may answer them, — if so be that I know anything of the matter."

"You will do wisely," observed the young man. "And now to business. What reason have you to suppose that the persons for whom you watch are not already beyond the village?"

The seaman paused long before he answered, and gazed earnestly at Edward, apparently endeavoring to ascertain from his countenance the amount of his knowledge. This he probably overrated, but, nevertheless, hazarded a falsehood.

"I doubt not they passed before midnight," he said. "I warrant you they are many a league towards the seacoast, ere this."

"You have kept watch, then, since midnight?" asked Edward.

"Ay, that have I! And a dark and rough one it was," answered the stranger.

"And you are certain that, if they passed at all, it must have been before that hour?"

"I kept my walk across the road till the village was all astir," said the seaman. "They could not have missed me. So, you see, your best way is to give chase; for they have a long start of you, and you have no time to lose."

"Your information is sufficient, my good friend," said Edward, with a smile. "I have reason to know that they did not commence their flight before midnight. You have made it evident that they have not passed since: ergo, they have not passed at all, — an indisputable syllogism. And now will I retrace my footsteps."

"Stay, young man," said the stranger, placing himself full in Edward's way as he was about to hasten to the inn. "You have drawn me in to betray my comrade; but, before you leave this place, you must answer a question or two of mine. Do you mean to take the law with you? or will you right your wrongs, if you have any, with your own right hand?"

"It is my intention to take the latter method. But, if I choose the former, what then?" demanded Edward.

"Nay, nothing: only you or I might not have gone hence alive," replied the stranger. "But as you say he shall have fair play" —

"On my word, friend," interrupted the young man, "I fear your intelligence has come too late to do either good or harm. Look towards the inn: my companions are getting to horse, and, my life on it, they know whither to ride."

So saying, he hastened away, followed by the stranger. It was indeed evident that news of some kind or other had reached the village. The people were gathered in groups, conversing eagerly; and the pale cheeks, uplifted eyebrows, and outspread hands of some of the female sex filled Edward's mind with undefined but intolerable apprehensions. He forced his way to Dr. Melmoth, who had just mounted, and, seizing his bridle, peremptorily demanded if he knew aught of Ellen Langton.

CHAPTER VIII

"Full many a miserable year hath passed:
She knows him as one dead, or worse than dead:
And many a change her varied life hath known;
But her heart none." MATURIN.

SINCE her interview with the angler, which was interrupted by the appearance of Fanshawe, Ellen Langton's hitherto calm and peaceful mind had been in a state of insufferable doubt and dismay. She was imperatively called upon — at least, she so conceived — to break through the rules which nature and education impose upon her sex, to quit the protection of those whose desire for her welfare was true and strong, and to trust herself, for what purpose she scarcely knew, to a stranger, from whom the instinctive purity of her mind would involuntarily have shrunk, under whatever circumstances she had met him. The letter which she had received from the hands of the angler had seemed to her inexperience to prove beyond a doubt that the bearer was the friend of her father, and authorized by him, if her duty and affection were stronger than her fears, to guide her to his retreat. The letter spoke vaguely of losses and misfortunes, and of a necessity for conceal-

ment on her father's part, and secrecy on hers; and, to the credit of Ellen's not very romantic understanding, it must be acknowledged that the mystery of the plot had nearly prevented its success. She did not, indeed, doubt that the letter was from her father's hand; for every line and stroke, and even many of its phrases, were familiar to her. Her apprehension was, that his misfortunes, of what nature soever they were, had affected his intellect, and that, under such an influence, he had commanded her to take a step which nothing less than such a command could justify. Ellen did not, however, remain long in this opinion; for when she reperused the letter, and considered the firm, regular characters and the style, — calm and cold, even in requesting such a sacrifice, — she felt that there was nothing like insanity here. In fine, she came gradually to the belief that there were strong reasons, though incomprehensible by her, for the secrecy that her father had enjoined.

Having arrived at this conviction, her decision lay plain before her. Her affection for Mr. Langton was not, indeed, — nor was it possible, — so strong as that she would have felt for a parent who had watched over her from her infancy. Neither was the conception she had unavoidably formed of his character such as to promise that in him she would find an equivalent for all she must sacrifice. On the contrary, her gentle

nature and loving heart, which otherwise would have rejoiced in a new object of affection, now shrank with something like dread from the idea of meeting her father, — stately, cold, and stern as she could not but imagine him. A sense of duty was therefore Ellen's only support in resolving to tread the dark path that lay before her.

Had there been any person of her own sex in whom Ellen felt confidence, there is little doubt that she would so far have disobeyed her father's letter as to communicate its contents, and take counsel as to her proceedings. But Mrs. Melmoth was the only female — excepting, indeed, the maid servant — to whom it was possible to make the communication; and, though Ellen at first thought of such a step, her timidity and her knowledge of the lady's character did not permit her to venture upon it. She next reviewed her acquaintances of the other sex; and Dr. Melmoth first presented himself, as in every respect but one an unexceptionable confidant. But the single exception was equivalent to many. The maiden, with the highest opinion of the doctor's learning and talents, had sufficient penetration to know, that, in the ways of the world, she was herself the better skilled of the two. For a moment she thought of Edward Walcott; but he was light and wild, and, which her delicacy made an insurmountable ob-

jection, there was an untold love between them. Her thoughts finally centred on Fanshawe. In his judgment, young and inexperienced though he was, she would have placed a firm trust; and his zeal, from whatever cause it arose, she could not doubt.

If, in the short time allowed her for reflection, an opportunity had occurred for consulting him, she would, in all probability, have taken advantage of it. But the terms on which they had parted the preceding evening had afforded him no reason to hope for her confidence; and he felt that there were others who had a better right to it than himself. He did not, therefore, throw himself in her way; and poor Ellen was consequently left without an adviser.

The determination that resulted from her own unassisted wisdom has been seen. When discovered by Dr. Melmoth at Hugh Crombie's inn, she was wholly prepared for flight, and, but for the intervention of the storm, would, ere then, have been far away.

The firmness of resolve that had impelled a timid maiden upon such a step was not likely to be broken by one defeat; and Ellen, accordingly, confident that the stranger would make a second attempt, determined that no effort on her part should be wanting to its success. On reaching her chamber, therefore, instead of re-

tiring to rest (of which, from her sleepless thoughts of the preceding night, she stood greatly in need), she sat watching for the abatement of the storm. Her meditations were now calmer than at any time since her first meeting with the angler. She felt as if her fate was decided. The stain had fallen upon her reputation: she was no longer the same pure being in the opinion of those whose approbation she most valued.

One obstacle to her flight — and, to a woman's mind, a most powerful one — had thus been removed. Dark and intricate as was the way, it was easier now to proceed than to pause; and her desperate and forlorn situation gave her a strength which hitherto she had not felt.

At every cessation in the torrent of rain that beat against the house, Ellen flew to the window, expecting to see the stranger form beneath it. But the clouds would again thicken, and the storm recommence with its former violence; and she began to fear that the approach of morning would compel her to meet the now dreaded face of Dr. Melmoth. At length, however, a strong and steady wind, supplying the place of the fitful gusts of the preceding part of the night, broke and scattered the clouds from the broad expanse of the sky. The moon, commencing her late voyage not long before the

sun, was now visible, setting forth like a lonely ship from the dark line of the horizon, and touching at many a little silver cloud the islands of that aerial deep. Ellen felt that now the time was come; and, with a calmness wonderful to herself, she prepared for her final departure.

She had not long to wait ere she saw, between the vacancies of the trees, the angler advancing along the shady avenue that led to the principal entrance of Dr. Melmoth's dwelling. He had no need to summon her either by word or signal; for she had descended, emerged from the door, and stood before him, while he was yet at some distance from the house.

"You have watched well," he observed, in a low, strange tone. "As saith the Scripture, 'Many daughters have done virtuously; but thou excellest them all.'"

He took her arm, and they hastened down the avenue. Then, leaving Hugh Crombie's inn on their right, they found its master in a spot so shaded that the moonbeams could not enlighten it. He held by the bridle two horses, one of which the angler assisted Ellen to mount. Then, turning to the landlord, he pressed a purse into his hand; but Hugh drew back, and it fell to the ground.

"No! This would not have tempted me, nor will it reward me," he said. "If you have

gold to spare, there are some that need it more than I."

"I understand you, mine host. I shall take thought for them; and enough will remain for you and me," replied his comrade. "I have seen the day when such a purse would not have slipped between your fingers. Well, be it so. And now, Hugh, my old friend, a shake of your hand; for we are seeing our last of each other."

"Pray Heaven it be so! though I wish you no ill," said the landlord, giving his hand.

He then seemed about to approach Ellen, who had been unable to distinguish the words of this brief conversation; but his comrade prevented him. "There is no time to lose," he observed. "The moon is growing pale already, and we should have been many a mile beyond the valley ere this." He mounted as he spoke; and, guiding Ellen's rein till they reached the road, they dashed away.

It was now that she felt herself completely in his power; and with that consciousness there came a sudden change of feeling and an altered view of her conduct. A thousand reasons forced themselves upon her mind, seeming to prove that she had been deceived; while the motives, so powerful with her but a moment before, had either vanished from her memory or lost all their efficacy. Her companion, who gazed searchingly into her face, where the moonlight,

coming down between the pines, allowed him to read its expression, probably discerned somewhat of the state of her thoughts.

"Do you repent so soon?" he inquired. "We have a weary way before us. Faint not ere we have well entered upon it."

"I have left dear friends behind me, and am going I know not whither," replied Ellen tremblingly.

"You have a faithful guide," he observed, turning away his head, and speaking in the tone of one who endeavors to smother a laugh.

Ellen had no heart to continue the conversation; and they rode on in silence, and through a wild and gloomy scene. The wind roared heavily through the forest, and the trees shed their raindrops upon the travellers. The road, at all times rough, was now broken into deep gullies, through which streams went murmuring down to mingle with the river. The pale moonlight combined with the gray of the morning to give a ghastly and unsubstantial appearance to every object.

The difficulties of the road had been so much increased by the storm, that the purple eastern clouds gave notice of the near approach of the sun just as the travellers reached the little lonesome cottage which Ellen remembered to have visited several months before. On arriving opposite to it, her companion checked his horse,

and gazed with a wild earnestness at the wretched habitation. Then, stifling a groan that would not altogether be repressed, he was about to pass on; but at that moment the cottage door opened, and a woman, whose sour, unpleasant countenance Ellen recognized, came hastily forth. She seemed not to heed the travellers; but the angler, his voice thrilling and quivering with indescribable emotion, addressed her.

"Woman, whither do you go?" he inquired.

She started, but, after a momentary pause, replied: "There is one within at the point of death. She struggles fearfully; and I cannot endure to watch alone by her bedside. If you are Christians, come in with me."

Ellen's companion leaped hastily from his horse, assisted her also to dismount, and followed the woman into the cottage, having first thrown the bridles of the horses carelessly over the branch of a tree. Ellen trembled at the awful scene she would be compelled to witness; but, when death was so near at hand, it was more terrible to stand alone in the dim morning light than even to watch the parting of soul and body. She therefore entered the cottage.

Her guide, his face muffled in his cloak, had taken his stand at a distance from the death-bed, in a part of the room which neither the increasing daylight nor the dim rays of a solitary lamp had yet enlightened. At Ellen's en-

trance, the dying woman lay still, and apparently calm, except that a plaintive, half-articulate sound occasionally wandered through her lips.

"Hush! For mercy's sake, silence!" whispered the other woman to the strangers. "There is good hope now that she will die a peaceable death; but, if she is disturbed, the boldest of us will not dare to stand by her bedside."

The whisper by which her sister endeavored to preserve quiet perhaps reached the ears of the dying female; for she now raised herself in bed, slowly, but with a strength superior to what her situation promised. Her face was ghastly and wild, from long illness, approaching death, and disturbed intellect; and a disembodied spirit could scarcely be a more fearful object than one whose soul was just struggling forth. Her sister, approaching with the soft and stealing step appropriate to the chamber of sickness and death, attempted to replace the covering around her, and to compose her again upon the pillow. "Lie down and sleep, sister," she said; "and, when the day breaks, I will waken you. Methinks your breath comes freer already. A little more slumber, and to-morrow you will be well."

"My illness is gone: I am well," said the dying woman, gasping for breath. "I wander where the fresh breeze comes sweetly over my

face; but a close and stifled air has choked my lungs."

"Yet a little while, and you will no longer draw your breath in pain," observed her sister, again replacing the bedclothes, which she continued to throw off.

"My husband is with me," murmured the widow. "He walks by my side, and speaks to me as in old times; but his words come faintly on my ear. Cheer me and comfort me, my husband; for there is a terror in those dim, motionless eyes, and in that shadowy voice."

As she spoke thus, she seemed to gaze upon some object that stood by her bedside; and the eyes of those who witnessed this scene could not but follow the direction of hers. They observed that the dying woman's own shadow was marked upon the wall, receiving a tremulous motion from the fitful rays of the lamp, and from her own convulsive efforts. "My husband stands gazing on me," she said again; "but my son, — where is he? And, as I ask, the father turns away his face. Where is our son? For his sake, I have longed to come to this land of rest. For him I have sorrowed many years. Will he not comfort me now?"

At these words the stranger made a few hasty steps towards the bed; but, ere he reached it, he conquered the impulse that drew him thither, and, shrouding his face more deeply in his cloak,

returned to his former position. The dying woman, in the meantime, had thrown herself back upon the bed; and her sobbing and wailing, imaginary as was their cause, were inexpressibly affecting.

"Take me back to earth," she said; "for its griefs have followed me hither."

The stranger advanced, and, seizing the lamp, knelt down by the bedside, throwing the light full upon his pale and convulsed features.

"Mother, here is your son!" he exclaimed.

At that unforgotten voice, the darkness burst away at once from her soul. She arose in bed, her eyes and her whole countenance beaming with joy, and threw her arms about his neck. A multitude of words seemed struggling for utterance; but they gave place to a low moaning sound, and then to the silence of death. The one moment of happiness, that recompensed years of sorrow, had been her last. Her son laid the lifeless form upon the pillow, and gazed with fixed eyes on his mother's face.

As he looked, the expression of enthusiastic joy that parting life had left upon the features faded gradually away; and the countenance, though no longer wild, assumed the sadness which it had worn through a long course of grief and pain. On beholding this natural consequence of death, the thought, perhaps, occurred to him, that her soul, no longer dependent

on the imperfect means of intercourse possessed by mortals, had communed with his own, and become acquainted with all its guilt and misery. He started from the bedside, and covered his face with his hands, as if to hide it from those dead eyes.

Such a scene as has been described could not but have a powerful effect upon any one who retained aught of humanity; and the grief of the son, whose natural feelings had been blunted, but not destroyed, by an evil life, was much more violent than his outward demeanor would have expressed. But his deep repentance for the misery he had brought upon his parent did not produce in him a resolution to do wrong no more. The sudden consciousness of accumulated guilt made him desperate. He felt as if no one had thenceforth a claim to justice or compassion at his hands, when his neglect and cruelty had poisoned his mother's life and hastened her death. Thus it was that the Devil wrought with him to his own destruction, reversing the salutary effect which his mother would have died exultingly to produce upon his mind. He now turned to Ellen Langton with a demeanor singularly calm and composed.

"We must resume our journey," he said, in his usual tone of voice. "The sun is on the point of rising, though but little light finds its way into this hovel."

Ellen's previous suspicions as to the character of her companion had now become certainty so far as to convince her that she was in the power of a lawless and guilty man ; though what fate he intended for her she was unable to conjecture. An open opposition to his will, however, could not be ventured upon ; especially as she discovered, on looking round the apartment, that, with the exception of the corpse, they were alone.

" Will you not attend your mother's funeral ? " she asked, trembling, and conscious that he would discover her fears.

" The dead must bury their dead," he replied. " I have brought my mother to her grave, — and what can a son do more ? This purse, however, will serve to lay her in the earth, and leave something for the old hag. Whither is she gone ? " interrupted he, casting a glance round the room in search of the old woman. " Nay, then, we must speedily to horse. I know her of old."

Thus saying, he threw the purse upon the table, and, without trusting himself to look again towards the dead, conducted Ellen out of the cottage. The first rays of the sun at that moment gilded the tallest trees of the forest.

On looking towards the spot where the horses had stood, Ellen thought that Providence, in answer to her prayers, had taken care for her de-

liverance. They were no longer there, — a circumstance easily accounted for by the haste with which the bridles had been thrown over the branch of the tree. Her companion, however, imputed it to another cause.

"The hag! She would sell her own flesh and blood by weight and measure," he muttered to himself. "This is some plot of hers, I know well."

He put his hand to his forehead for a moment's space, seeming to reflect on the course most advisable to be pursued. Ellen, perhaps unwisely, interposed.

"Would it not be well to return?" she asked timidly. "There is now no hope of escaping; but I might yet reach home undiscovered."

"Return!" repeated her guide, with a look and smile from which she turned away her face. "Have you forgotten your father and his misfortunes? No, no, sweet Ellen; it is too late for such thoughts as these."

He took her hand, and led her towards the forest, in the rear of the cottage. She would fain have resisted; but they were all alone, and the attempt must have been both fruitless and dangerous. She therefore trod with him a path so devious, so faintly traced, and so overgrown with bushes and young trees, that only a most accurate acquaintance in his early days could have enabled her guide to retain it. To him, how-

ever, it seemed so perfectly familiar, that he was not once compelled to pause, though the numerous windings soon deprived Ellen of all knowledge of the situation of the cottage. They descended a steep hill, and, proceeding parallel to the river, — as Ellen judged by its rushing sound, — at length found themselves at what proved to be the termination of their walk.

Ellen now recollected a remark of Edward Walcott's respecting the wild and rude scenery through which the river here kept its way; and, in less agitating circumstances, her pleasure and admiration would have been great. They stood beneath a precipice, so high that the loftiest pine tops (and many of them seemed to soar to heaven) scarcely surmounted it. This line of rock has a considerable extent, at unequal heights, and with many interruptions, along the course of the river ; and it seems probable that, at some former period, it was the boundary of the waters, though they are now confined within far less ambitious limits. The inferior portion of the crag, beneath which Ellen and her guide were standing, varies so far from the perpendicular as not to be inaccessible by a careful footstep. But only one person has been known to attempt the ascent of the superior half, and only one the descent ; yet, steep as is the height, trees and bushes of various kinds have clung to the rock, wherever their roots could gain the

slightest hold; thus seeming to prefer the scanty and difficult nourishment of the cliff to a more luxurious life in the rich interval that extends from its base to the river. But, whether or no these hardy vegetables have voluntarily chosen their rude resting place, the cliff is indebted to them for much of the beauty that tempers its sublimity. When the eye is pained and wearied by the bold nakedness of the rock, it rests with pleasure on the cheerful foliage of the birch, or upon the darker green of the funereal pine. Just at the termination of the accessible portion of the crag, these trees are so numerous, and their foliage so dense, that they completely shroud from view a considerable excavation, formed, probably, hundreds of years since, by the fall of a portion of the rock. The detached fragment still lies at a little distance from the base, gray and moss-grown, but corresponding, in its general outline, to the cavity from which it was rent.

But the most singular and beautiful object in all this scene is a tiny fount of crystal water, that gushes forth from the high, smooth forehead of the cliff. Its perpendicular descent is of many feet; after which it finds its way, with a sweet diminutive murmur, to the level ground.

It is not easy to conceive whence the barren rock procures even the small supply of water that is necessary to the existence of this stream;

it is as unaccountable as the gush of gentle feeling which sometimes proceeds from the hardest heart: but there it continues to flow and fall, undiminished and unincreased. The stream is so slender, that the gentlest breeze suffices to disturb its descent, and to scatter its pure sweet waters over the face of the cliff. But in that deep forest there is seldom a breath of wind; so that, plashing continually upon one spot, the fount has worn its own little channel of white sand, by which it finds its way to the river. Alas that the Naiades have lost their old authority! for what a deity of tiny loveliness must once have presided here!

Ellen's companion paused not to gaze either upon the loveliness or the sublimity of this scene, but, assisting her where it was requisite, began the steep and difficult ascent of the lower part of the cliff. The maiden's ingenuity in vain endeavored to assign reasons for this movement; but when they reached the tuft of trees, which, as has been noticed, grew at the ultimate point where mortal footstep might safely tread, she perceived through their thick branches the recess in the rock. Here they entered; and her guide pointed to a mossy seat, in the formation of which, to judge from its regularity, art had probably a share.

"Here you may remain in safety," he observed, "till I obtain the means of proceeding.

In this spot you need fear no intruder; but it will be dangerous to venture beyond its bounds."

The meaning glance that accompanied these words intimated to poor Ellen, that, in warning her against danger, he alluded to the vengeance with which he would visit any attempt to escape. To leave her thus alone, trusting to the influence of such a threat, was a bold, yet a necessary and by no means a hopeless measure. On Ellen it produced the desired effect; and she sat in the cave as motionless, for a time, as if she had herself been a part of the rock. In other circumstances this shady recess would have been a delightful retreat during the sultry warmth of a summer's day. The dewy coolness of the rock kept the air always fresh, and the sunbeams never thrust themselves so as to dissipate the mellow twilight through the green trees with which the chamber was curtained. Ellen's sleeplessness and agitation for many preceding hours had perhaps deadened her feelings; for she now felt a sort of indifference creeping upon her, an inability to realize the evils of her situation, at the same time that she was perfectly aware of them all. This torpor of mind increased, till her eyelids began to grow heavy and the cave and trees to swim before her sight. In a few moments more she would probably have been in dreamless slumber; but, rousing herself by a strong effort, she looked round the

narrow limits of the cave in search of objects to excite her worn-out mind.

She now perceived, wherever the smooth rock afforded place for them, the initials or the full-length names of former visitants of the cave. What wanderer on mountain tops or in deep solitudes has not felt the influence of these records of humanity, telling him, when such a conviction is soothing to his heart, that he is not alone in the world? It was singular, that, when her own mysterious situation had almost lost its power to engage her thoughts, Ellen perused these barren memorials with a certain degree of interest. She went on repeating them aloud, and starting at the sound of her own voice, till at length, as one name passed through her lips, she paused, and then, leaning her forehead against the letters, burst into tears. It was the name of Edward Walcott; and it struck upon her heart, arousing her to a full sense of her present misfortunes and dangers, and, more painful still, of her past happiness. Her tears had, however, a soothing and at the same time a strengthening effect upon her mind; for, when their gush was over, she raised her head, and began to meditate on the means of escape. She wondered at the species of fascination that had kept her, as if chained to the rock, so long, when there was, in reality, nothing to bar her pathway. She determined, late as it

was, to attempt her own deliverance, and for that purpose began slowly and cautiously to emerge from the cave.

Peeping out from among the trees, she looked and listened with most painful anxiety to discover if any living thing were in that seeming solitude, or if any sound disturbed the heavy stillness. But she saw only Nature in her wildest forms, and heard only the plash and murmur (almost inaudible, because continual) of the little waterfall, and the quick, short throbbing of her own heart, against which she pressed her hand as if to hush it. Gathering courage, therefore, she began to descend; and, starting often at the loose stones that even her light footstep displaced and sent rattling down, she at length reached the base of the crag in safety. She then made a few steps in the direction, as nearly as she could judge, by which she arrived at the spot, but paused, with a sudden revulsion of the blood to her heart, as her guide emerged from behind a projecting part of the rock. He approached her deliberately, an ironical smile writhing his features into a most disagreeable expression; while in his eyes there was something that seemed a wild, fierce joy. By a species of sophistry, of which oppressors often make use, he had brought himself to believe that he was now the injured one, and that Ellen, by her distrust of him, had fairly sub-

jected herself to whatever evil it consisted with his will and power to inflict upon her. Her only restraining influence over him, the consciousness, in his own mind, that he possessed her confidence, was now done away. Ellen, as well as her enemy, felt that this was the case. She knew not what to dread; but she was well aware that danger was at hand, and that, in the deep wilderness, there was none to help her, except that Being with whose inscrutable purposes it might consist to allow the wicked to triumph for a season, and the innocent to be brought low.

"Are you so soon weary of this quiet retreat?" demanded her guide, continuing to wear the same sneering smile. "Or has your anxiety for your father induced you to set forth alone in quest of the afflicted old man?"

"O, if I were but with him!" exclaimed Ellen. "But this place is lonely and fearful, and I cannot endure to remain here."

"Lonely, is it, sweet Ellen?" he rejoined. "Am I not with you? Yes, it is lonely,—lonely as guilt could wish. Cry aloud, Ellen, and spare not. Shriek, and see if there be any among these rocks and woods to hearken to you!"

"There is! there is One!" exclaimed Ellen, shuddering, and affrighted at the fearful meaning of his countenance. "He is here! He is there!" And she pointed to heaven.

"It may be so, dearest," he replied. "But if there be an Ear that hears and an Eye that sees all the evil of the earth, yet the Arm is slow to avenge. Else why do I stand before you a living man?"

"His vengeance may be delayed for a time, but not forever," she answered, gathering a desperate courage from the extremity of her fear.

"You say true, lovely Ellen; and I have done enough, ere now, to insure its heaviest weight. There is a pass, when evil deeds can add nothing to guilt, nor good ones take anything from it."

"Think of your mother, — of her sorrow through life, and perhaps even after death," Ellen began to say. But, as she spoke these words, the expression of his face was changed, becoming suddenly so dark and fiend-like, that she clasped her hands and fell on her knees before him.

"I have thought of my mother," he replied, speaking very low, and putting his face close to hers. "I remember the neglect, the wrong, the lingering and miserable death, that she received at my hands. By what claim can either man or woman henceforth expect mercy from me? If God will help you, be it so; but by those words you have turned my heart to stone."

At this period of their conversation, when Ellen's peril seemed most imminent, the attention of both was attracted by a fragment of rock,

which, falling from the summit of the crag, struck very near them. Ellen started from her knees, and, with her false guide, gazed eagerly upward, — he in the fear of interruption, she in the hope of deliverance.

CHAPTER IX

"At length, he cries, behold the fated spring!
Yon rugged cliff conceals the fountain blest,
Dark rocks its crystal source o'ershadowing."
PSYCHE.

THE tale now returns to Fanshawe, who, as will be recollected, after being overtaken by Edward Walcott, was left with little apparent prospect of aiding in the deliverance of Ellen Langton.

It would be difficult to analyze the feelings with which the student pursued the chase, or to decide whether he was influenced and animated by the same hopes of successful love that cheered his rival. That he was conscious of such hopes there is little reason to suppose; for the most powerful minds are not always the best acquainted with their own feelings. Had Fanshawe, moreover, acknowledged to himself the possibility of gaining Ellen's affections, his generosity would have induced him to refrain from her society before it was too late. He had read her character with accuracy, and had seen how fit she was to love, and to be loved by, a man who could find his happiness in the common occupations of the world; and Fanshawe never

deceived himself so far as to suppose that this would be the case with him. Indeed, he often wondered at the passion with which Ellen's simple loveliness of mind and person had inspired him, and which seemed to be founded on the principle of contrariety rather than of sympathy. It was the yearning of a soul, formed by Nature in a peculiar mould, for communion with those to whom it bore a resemblance, yet of whom it was not. But there was no reason to suppose that Ellen, who differed from the multitude only as being purer and better, would cast away her affections on the one, of all who surrounded her, least fitted to make her happy. Thus Fanshawe reasoned with himself, and of this he believed that he was convinced. Yet ever and anon he found himself involved in a dream of bliss, of which Ellen was to be the giver and the sharer. Then would he rouse himself, and press upon his mind the chilling consciousness that it was and could be but a dream. There was also another feeling, apparently discordant with those which have been enumerated. It was a longing for rest, for his old retirement, that came at intervals so powerfully upon him, as he rode on, that his heart sickened of the active exertion on which fate had thrust him.

After being overtaken by Edward Walcott, Fanshawe continued his journey with as much speed as was attainable by his wearied horse, but

at a pace infinitely too slow for his earnest thoughts. These had carried him far away, leaving him only such a consciousness of his present situation as to make diligent use of the spur, when a horse's tread at no great distance struck upon his ear. He looked forward and behind; but, though a considerable extent of the narrow, rocky, and grass-grown road was visible, he was the only traveller there. Yet again he heard the sound, which, he now discovered, proceeded from among the trees that lined the roadside. Alighting, he entered the forest, with the intention, if the steed proved to be disengaged, and superior to his own, of appropriating him to his own use. He soon gained a view of the object he sought; but the animal rendered a closer acquaintance unattainable, by immediately taking to his heels. Fanshawe had, however, made a most interesting discovery; for the horse was accoutred with a side saddle; and who but Ellen Langton could have been his rider? At this conclusion, though his perplexity was thereby in no degree diminished, the student immediately arrived. Returning to the road, and perceiving on the summit of the hill a cottage, which he recognized as the one he had entered with Ellen and Edward Walcott, he determined there to make inquiry respecting the objects of his pursuit.

On reaching the door of the poverty-stricken

dwelling, he saw that it was not now so desolate of inmates as on his previous visit. In the single inhabitable apartment were several elderly women, clad evidently in their well-worn and well-saved Sunday clothes, and all wearing a deep grievous expression of countenance. Fanshawe was not long in deciding that death was within the cottage, and that these aged females were of the class who love the house of mourning, because to them it is a house of feasting. It is a fact, disgusting and lamentable, that the disposition which Heaven, for the best of purposes, has implanted in the female breast — to watch by the sick and comfort the afflicted — frequently becomes depraved into an odious love of scenes of pain and death and sorrow. Such women are like the Ghouls of the Arabian Tales, whose feasting was among tombstones and upon dead carcasses.

(It is sometimes, though less frequently, the case, that this disposition to make a "joy of grief" extends to individuals of the other sex. But in us it is even less excusable and more disgusting, because it is our nature to shun the sick and afflicted; and, unless restrained by principles other than we bring into the world with us, men might follow the example of many animals in destroying the infirm of their own species. Indeed, instances of this nature might be adduced among savage nations.) Sometimes,

however, from an original *lusus naturæ*, or from the influence of circumstances, a man becomes a haunter of deathbeds, a tormentor of afflicted hearts, and a follower of funerals. Such an abomination now appeared before Fanshawe, and beckoned him into the cottage. He was considerably beyond the middle age, rather corpulent, with a broad, fat, tallow-complexioned countenance. The student obeyed his silent call, and entered the room, through the open door of which he had been gazing.

He now beheld, stretched out upon the bed where she had so lately lain in life, though dying, the yet uncoffined corpse of the aged woman whose death has been described. How frightful it seemed! — that fixed countenance of ashy paleness, amid its decorations of muslin and fine linen, as if a bride were decked for the marriage chamber, as if Death were a bridegroom and the coffin a bridal bed. Alas that the vanity of dress should extend even to the grave!

The female who, as being the near and only relative of the deceased, was supposed to stand in need of comfort, was surrounded by five or six of her own sex. These continually poured into her ear the stale, trite maxims which, where consolation is actually required, add torture insupportable to the wounded heart. Their present object, however, conducted herself with all

due decorum, holding her handkerchief to her tearless eyes, and answering with very grievous groans to the words of her comforters. Who could have imagined that there was joy in her heart, because, since her sister's death, there was but one remaining obstacle between herself and the sole property of that wretched cottage?

While Fanshawe stood silently observing this scene, a low, monotonous voice was uttering some words in his ear, of the meaning of which his mind did not immediately take note. He turned, and saw that the speaker was the person who had invited him to enter.

"What is your pleasure with me, sir?" demanded the student.

"I make bold to ask," replied the man, "whether you would choose to partake of some creature comfort, before joining in prayer with the family and friends of our deceased sister." As he spoke, he pointed to a table, on which was a moderate-sized stone jug and two or three broken glasses; for then, as now, there were few occasions of joy or grief on which ardent spirits were not considered indispensable, to heighten the one or to alleviate the other.

"I stand in no need of refreshment," answered Fanshawe; "and it is not my intention to pray at present."

"I pray your pardon, reverend sir," rejoined the other; "but your face is pale, and you look

wearied. A drop from yonder vessel is needful to recruit the outward man. And for the prayer, the sisters will expect it; and their souls are longing for the outpouring of the Spirit. I was intending to open my own mouth with such words as are given to my poor ignorance, but" —

Fanshawe was here about to interrupt this address, which proceeded on the supposition, arising from his black dress and thoughtful countenance, that he was a clergyman. But one of the females now approached him, and intimated that the sister of the deceased was desirous of the benefit of his conversation. He would have returned a negative to this request, but, looking towards the afflicted woman, he saw her withdraw her handkerchief from her eyes, and cast a brief but penetrating and most intelligent glance upon him. He immediately expressed his readiness to offer such consolation as might be in his power.

"And in the meantime," observed the lay preacher, "I will give the sisters to expect a word of prayer and exhortation, either from you or from myself."

These words were lost upon the supposed clergyman, who was already at the side of the mourner. The females withdrew out of earshot to give place to a more legitimate comforter than themselves.

"What know you respecting my purpose?" inquired Fanshawe, bending towards her.

The woman gave a groan — the usual result of all efforts at consolation — for the edification of the company, and then replied in a whisper, which reached only the ear for which it was intended: "I know whom you come to seek: I can direct you to them. Speak low, for God's sake!" she continued, observing that Fanshawe was about to utter an exclamation. She then resumed her groans with greater zeal than before.

"Where — where are they?" asked the student, in a whisper which all his efforts could scarcely keep below his breath. "I adjure you to tell me."

"And, if I should, how am I like to be bettered by it?" inquired the old woman, her speech still preceded and followed by a groan.

"O God! The *auri sacra fames!*" thought Fanshawe, with a sickening heart, looking at the motionless corpse upon the bed, and then at the wretched being whom the course of nature, in comparatively a moment of time, would reduce to the same condition.

He whispered again, however, putting his purse into the hag's hand: "Take this. Make your own terms when they are discovered. Only tell me where I must seek them, — and speedily, or it may be too late."

"I am a poor woman, and am afflicted," said she, taking the purse, unseen by any who were in the room. "It is little that worldly goods can do for me, and not long can I enjoy them." And here she was delivered of a louder and a more heartfelt groan than ever. She then continued: "Follow the path behind the cottage, that leads to the riverside. Walk along the foot of the rock, and search for them near the waterspout. Keep a slow pace till you are out of sight," she added, as the student started to his feet.

The guests of the cottage did not attempt to oppose Fanshawe's progress, when they saw him take the path towards the forest, imagining, probably, that he was retiring for the purpose of secret prayer. But the old woman laughed behind the handkerchief with which she veiled her face.

"Take heed to your steps, boy," she muttered; "for they are leading you whence you will not return. Death, too, for the slayer. Be it so."

Fanshawe, in the meanwhile, contrived to discover, and for a while to retain, the narrow and winding path that led to the riverside. But it was originally no more than a track, by which the cattle belonging to the cottage went down to their watering place, and by these four-footed passengers it had long been deserted. The fern

bushes, therefore, had grown over it; and in several places trees of considerable size had shot up in the midst. These difficulties could scarcely have been surmounted by the utmost caution; and as Fanshawe's thoughts were too deeply fixed upon the end to pay a due regard to the means, he soon became desperately bewildered both as to the locality of the river and of the cottage. Had he known, however, in which direction to seek the latter, he would not, probably, have turned back; not that he was infected by any chivalrous desire to finish the adventure alone, but because he would expect little assistance from those he had left there. Yet he could not but wonder — though he had not, in his first eagerness, taken notice of it — at the anxiety of the old woman that he should proceed singly, and without the knowledge of her guests, on the search. He nevertheless continued to wander on, — pausing often to listen for the rush of the river, and then starting forward with fresh rapidity, to rid himself of the sting of his own thoughts, which became painfully intense when undisturbed by bodily motion. His way was now frequently interrupted by rocks, that thrust their huge gray heads from the ground, compelling him to turn aside, and thus depriving him, fortunately, perhaps, of all remaining idea of the direction he had intended to pursue.

Thus he went on, his head turned back, and taking little heed to his footsteps, when, perceiving that he trod upon a smooth, level rock, he looked forward, and found himself almost on the utmost verge of a precipice.

After the throbbing of the heart that followed this narrow escape had subsided, he stood gazing down where the sunbeams slept so pleasantly at the roots of the tall old trees, with whose highest tops he was upon a level. Suddenly he seemed to hear voices — one well-remembered voice — ascending from beneath; and, approaching to the edge of the cliff, he saw at its base the two whom he sought.

He saw and interpreted Ellen's look and attitude of entreaty, though the words with which she sought to soften the ruthless heart of her guide became inaudible ere they reached the height where Fanshawe stood. He felt that Heaven had sent him thither, at the moment of her utmost need, to be the preserver of all that was dear to him; and he paused only to consider the mode in which her deliverance was to be effected. Life he would have laid down willingly, exultingly: his only care was, that the sacrifice should not be in vain.

At length, when Ellen fell upon her knees, he lifted a small fragment of rock and threw it down the cliff. It struck so near the pair, that it immediately drew the attention of both.

When the betrayer, at the instant in which he had almost defied the power of the Omnipotent to bring help to Ellen, became aware of Fanshawe's presence, his hardihood failed him for a time, and his knees actually tottered beneath him. There was something awful, to his apprehension, in the slight form that stood so far above him, like a being from another sphere, looking down upon his wickedness. But his half-superstitious dread endured only a moment's space; and then, mustering the courage that in a thousand dangers had not deserted him, he prepared to revenge the intrusion by which Fanshawe had a second time interrupted his designs.

"By Heaven, I will cast him down at her feet!" he muttered through his closed teeth. "There shall be no form nor likeness of man left in him. Then let him rise up, if he is able, and defend her."

Thus resolving, and overlooking all hazard in his eager hatred and desire for vengeance, he began a desperate attempt to ascend the cliff. The space which only had hitherto been deemed accessible was quickly passed; and in a moment more he was halfway up the precipice, clinging to trees, shrubs, and projecting portions of the rock, and escaping through hazards which seemed to menace inevitable destruction.

Fanshawe, as he watched his upward progress,

deemed that every step would be his last; but when he perceived that more than half, and apparently the most difficult part, of the ascent was surmounted, his opinion changed. His courage, however, did not fail him as the moment of need drew nigh. His spirits rose buoyantly; his limbs seemed to grow firm and strong; and he stood on the edge of the precipice, prepared for the death struggle which would follow the success of his enemy's attempt.

But that attempt was not successful. When within a few feet of the summit, the adventurer grasped at a twig too slenderly rooted to sustain his weight. It gave way in his hand, and he fell backward down the precipice. His head struck against the less perpendicular part of the rock, whence the body rolled heavily down to the detached fragment, of which mention has heretofore been made. There was no life left in him. With all the passion of hell alive in his heart, he had met the fate that he intended for Fanshawe.

The student paused not then to shudder at the sudden and awful overthrow of his enemy; for he saw that Ellen lay motionless at the foot of the cliff. She had indeed fainted at the moment she became aware of her deliverer's presence; and no stronger proof could she have given of her firm reliance upon his protection.

Fanshawe was not deterred by the danger, of which he had just received so fearful an evidence, from attempting to descend to her assistance; and, whether owing to his advantage in lightness of frame or to superior caution, he arrived safely at the base of the precipice.

He lifted the motionless form of Ellen in his arms, and, resting her head against his shoulder, gazed on her cheek of lily paleness with a joy, a triumph, that rose almost to madness. It contained no mixture of hope; it had no reference to the future: it was the perfect bliss of a moment, — an insulated point of happiness. He bent over her, and pressed a kiss — the first, and he knew it would be the last — on her pale lips; then, bearing her to the fountain, he sprinkled its waters profusely over her face, neck, and bosom. She at length opened her eyes, slowly and heavily; but her mind was evidently wandering, till Fanshawe spoke.

"Fear not, Ellen: you are safe," he said.

At the sound of his voice, her arm, which was thrown over his shoulder, involuntarily tightened its embrace, telling him, by that mute motion, with how firm a trust she confided in him. But, as a fuller sense of her situation returned, she raised herself to her feet, though still retaining the support of his arm. It was singular, that, although her insensibility had commenced before the fall of her guide, she

turned away her eyes, as if instinctively, from the spot where the mangled body lay ; nor did she inquire of Fanshawe the manner of her deliverance.

" Let us begone from this place," she said, in faint, low accents, and with an inward shudder.

They walked along the precipice, seeking some passage by which they might gain its summit, and at length arrived at that by which Ellen and her guide had descended. Chance — for neither Ellen nor Fanshawe could have discovered the path — led them, after but little wandering, to the cottage. A messenger was sent forward to the town to inform Dr. Melmoth of the recovery of his ward ; and the intelligence thus received had interrupted Edward Walcott's conversation with the seaman.

It would have been impossible, in the mangled remains of Ellen's guide, to discover the son of the Widow Butler, except from the evidence of her sister, who became, by his death, the sole inheritrix of the cottage. The history of this evil and unfortunate man must be comprised within very narrow limits. A harsh father and his own untamable disposition had driven him from home in his boyhood ; and chance had made him the temporary companion of Hugh Crombie. After two years of wandering, when in a foreign country and in circumstances of utmost need, he attracted the notice of Mr.

Langton. The merchant took his young countryman under his protection, afforded him advantages of education, and, as his capacity was above mediocrity, gradually trusted him in many affairs of importance. During this period, there was no evidence of dishonesty on his part. On the contrary, he manifested a zeal for Mr. Langton's interest, and a respect for his person, that proved his strong sense of the benefits he had received. But he unfortunately fell into certain youthful indiscretions, which, if not entirely pardonable, might have been palliated by many considerations that would have occurred to a merciful man. Mr. Langton's justice, however, was seldom tempered by mercy; and, on this occasion, he shut the door of repentance against his erring *protégé*, and left him in a situation not less desperate than that from which he had relieved him. The goodness and the nobleness of which his heart was not destitute turned, from that time, wholly to evil; and he became irrecoverably ruined and irreclaimably depraved. His wandering life had led him, shortly before the period of this tale, to his native country. Here the erroneous intelligence of Mr. Langton's death had reached him, and suggested the scheme, which circumstances seemed to render practicable, but the fatal termination of which has been related.

The body was buried where it had fallen, close

by the huge, gray, moss-grown fragment of rock, — a monument on which centuries can work little change. The eighty years that have elapsed since the death of the widow's son have, however, been sufficient to obliterate an inscription which some one was at the pains to cut in the smooth surface of the stone. Traces of letters are still discernible; but the writer's many efforts could never discover a connected meaning. The grave, also, is overgrown with fern bushes, and sunk to a level with the surrounding soil. But the legend, though my version of it may be forgotten, will long be traditionary in that lonely spot, and give to the rock and the precipice and the fountain an interest thrilling to the bosom of the romantic wanderer.

CHAPTER X

'Sitting then in shelter shady,
To observe and mark his mone
Suddenly I saw a lady
Hasting to him all alone,
Clad in maiden-white and green,
Whom I judged the Forest Queen."

THE WOODMAN'S BEAR.

DURING several weeks succeeding her danger and deliverance, Ellen Langton was confined to her chamber by illness, resulting from the agitation she had endured. Her father embraced the earliest opportunity to express his deep gratitude to Fanshawe for the inestimable service he had rendered, and to intimate a desire to requite it to the utmost of his power. He had understood that the student's circumstances were not prosperous, and, with the feeling of one who was habituated to give and receive a *quid pro quo*, he would have rejoiced to share his abundance with the deliverer of his daughter. But Fanshawe's flushed brow and haughty eye, when he perceived the thought that was stirring in Mr. Langton's mind, sufficiently proved to the discerning merchant that money was not, in the present instance, a circulating medium. His penetration, in fact, very

soon informed him of the motives by which the young man had been actuated in risking his life for Ellen Langton; but he made no allusion to the subject, concealing his intentions, if any he had, in his own bosom.

During Ellen's illness, Edward Walcott had manifested the deepest anxiety respecting her: he had wandered around and within the house, like a restless ghost, informing himself of the slightest fluctuation in her health, and thereby graduating his happiness or misery. He was at length informed that her convalescence had so far progressed, that, on the succeeding day, she would venture below. From that time Edward's visits to Dr. Melmoth's mansion were relinquished. His cheek grew pale and his eye lost its merry light; but he resolutely kept himself a banished man. Multifarious were the conjectures to which this course of conduct gave rise; but Ellen understood and approved his motives. The maiden must have been far more blind than ever woman was in such a matter, if the late events had not convinced her of Fanshawe's devoted attachment; and she saw that Edward Walcott, feeling the superior, the irresistible strength of his rival's claim, had retired from the field. Fanshawe, however, discovered no intention to pursue his advantage. He paid her no voluntary visit, and even declined an invitation to tea, with which Mrs. Melmoth, after

extensive preparations, had favored him. He seemed to have resumed all the habits of seclusion by which he was distinguished previous to his acquaintance with Ellen, except that he still took his sunset walk on the banks of the stream.

On one of these occasions, he stayed his footsteps by the old leafless oak which had witnessed Ellen's first meeting with the angler. Here he mused upon the circumstances that had resulted from that event, and upon the rights and privileges (for he was well aware of them all) which those circumstances had given him. Perhaps the loveliness of the scene and the recollections connected with it, perhaps the warm and mellow sunset, perhaps a temporary weakness in himself, had softened his feelings, and shaken the firmness of his resolution to leave Ellen to be happy with his rival. His strong affections rose up against his reason, whispering that bliss — on earth and in heaven, through time and eternity — might yet be his lot with her. It is impossible to conceive of the flood of momentary joy which the bare admission of such a possibility sent through his frame; and, just when the tide was highest in his heart, a soft little hand was laid upon his own, and, starting, he beheld Ellen at his side.

Her illness, since the commencement of which Fanshawe had not seen her, had wrought a considerable but not a disadvantageous change in

her appearance. She was paler and thinner; her countenance was more intellectual, more spiritual; and a spirit did the student almost deem her, appearing so suddenly in that solitude. There was a quick vibration of the delicate blood in her cheek, yet never brightening to the glow of perfect health; a tear was glittering on each of her long, dark eyelashes; and there was a gentle tremor through all her frame, which compelled her, for a little space, to support herself against the oak. Fanshawe's first impulse was to address her in words of rapturous delight; but he checked himself, and attempted — vainly, indeed — to clothe his voice in tones of calm courtesy. His remark merely expressed pleasure at her restoration to health; and Ellen's low and indistinct reply had as little relation to the feelings that agitated her.

"Yet I fear," continued Fanshawe, recovering a degree of composure, and desirous of assigning a motive (which he felt was not the true one) for Ellen's agitation, — "I fear that your walk has extended too far for your strength."

"It would have borne me farther, with such a motive," she replied, still trembling, — "to express my gratitude to my preserver."

"It was needless, Ellen, it was needless; for the deed brought with it its own reward!" exclaimed Fanshawe, with a vehemence that he could not repress. "It was dangerous, for" —

Here he interrupted himself, and turned his face away.

"And wherefore was it dangerous?" inquired Ellen, laying her hand gently on his arm; for he seemed about to leave her.

"Because you have a tender and generous heart, and I a weak one," he replied.

"Not so," answered she, with animation. "Yours is a heart full of strength and nobleness; and if it have a weakness" —

"You know well that it has, Ellen, — one that has swallowed up all its strength," said Fanshawe. "Was it wise, then, to tempt it thus, when, if it yield, the result must be your own misery?"

Ellen did not affect to misunderstand his meaning. On the contrary, with a noble frankness, she answered to what was implied rather than expressed.

"Do me not this wrong," she said, blushing, yet earnestly. "Can it be misery? Will it not be happiness to form the tie that shall connect you to the world? to be your guide — a humble one, it is true, but the one of your choice — to the quiet paths from which your proud and lonely thoughts have estranged you? O, I know that there will be happiness in such a lot, from these and a thousand other sources!"

The animation with which Ellen spoke, and, at the same time, a sense of the singular course

to which her gratitude had impelled her, caused her beauty to grow brighter and more enchanting with every word. And when, as she concluded, she extended her hand to Fanshawe, to refuse it was like turning from an angel, who would have guided him to heaven. But, had he been capable of making the woman he loved a sacrifice to her own generosity, that act would have rendered him unworthy of her. Yet the struggle was a severe one ere he could reply.

"You have spoken generously and nobly, Ellen," he said. "I have no way to prove that I deserve your generosity but by refusing to take advantage of it. Even if your heart were yet untouched, if no being more happily constituted than myself had made an impression there, even then, I trust, a selfish passion would not be stronger than my integrity. But now" — He would have proceeded, but the firmness which had hitherto sustained him gave way. He turned aside to hide the tears which all the pride of his nature could not restrain, and which, instead of relieving, added to his anguish. At length he resumed: "No, Ellen, we must part now and forever. Your life will be long and happy. Mine will be short, but not altogether wretched, nor shorter than if we had never met. When you hear that I am in my grave, do not imagine that you have hastened me thither. Think that you scattered bright dreams around

my pathway, — an ideal happiness, that you would have sacrificed your own to realize."

He ceased; and Ellen felt that his determination was unalterable. She could not speak; but, taking his hand, she pressed it to her lips, and they saw each other no more. Mr. Langton and his daughter shortly after returned to the seaport which, for several succeeding years, was their residence.

After Ellen's departure, Fanshawe returned to his studies with the same absorbing ardor that had formerly characterized him. His face was as seldom seen among the young and gay; the pure breeze and the blessed sunshine as seldom refreshed his pale and weary brow; and his lamp burned as constantly from the first shade of evening till the gray morning light began to dim its beams. Nor did he, as weak men will, treasure up his love in a hidden chamber of his breast. He was in reality the thoughtful and earnest student that he seemed. He had exerted the whole might of his spirit over itself, and he was a conqueror. Perhaps, indeed, a summer breeze of sad and gentle thoughts would sometimes visit him; but, in these brief memories of his love, he did not wish that it should be revived, or mourn over its event.

There were many who felt an interest in

Fanshawe ; but the influence of none could prevail upon him to lay aside the habits, mental and physical, by which he was bringing himself to the grave. His passage thither was consequently rapid, terminating just as he reached his twentieth year. His fellow students erected to his memory a monument of rough-hewn granite, with a white marble slab for the inscription. This was borrowed from the grave of Nathaniel Mather, whom, in his almost insane eagerness for knowledge, and in his early death, Fanshawe resembled.

THE ASHES OF A HARD STUDENT
AND A GOOD SCHOLAR

Many tears were shed over his grave ; but the thoughtful and the wise, though turf never covered a nobler heart, could not lament that it was so soon at rest. He left a world for which he was unfit ; and we trust, that, among the innumerable stars of heaven, there is one where he has found happiness.

Of the other personages of this tale, — Hugh Crombie, being exposed to no strong temptations, lived and died an honest man. Concerning Dr. Melmoth it is unnecessary here to speak. The reader, if he have any curiosity upon the subject, is referred to his Life, which, together with several sermons and other pro-

ductions of the doctor, was published by his successor in the presidency of Harley College, about the year 1768.

It was not till four years after Fanshawe's death that Edward Walcott was united to Ellen Langton. Their future lives were uncommonly happy. Ellen's gentle, almost imperceptible, but powerful influence drew her husband away from the passions and pursuits that would have interfered with domestic felicity; and he never regretted the worldly distinction of which she thus deprived him. Theirs was a long life of calm and quiet bliss; and what matters it, that, except in these pages, they have left no name behind them?

THE ANTIQUE RING

"YES, indeed: the gem is as bright as a star, and curiously set," said Clara Pemberton, examining an antique ring, which her betrothed lover had just presented to her, with a very pretty speech. "It needs only one thing to make it perfect."

"And what is that?" asked Mr. Edward Caryl, secretly anxious for the credit of his gift. "A modern setting, perhaps?"

"O no! That would destroy the charm at once," replied Clara. "It needs nothing but a story. I long to know how many times it has been the pledge of faith between two lovers, and whether the vows, of which it was the symbol, were always kept or often broken. Not that I should be too scrupulous about facts. If you happen to be unacquainted with its authentic history, so much the better. May it not have sparkled upon a queen's finger? Or who knows but it is the very ring which Posthumus received from Imogen? In short, you must kindle your imagination at the lustre of this diamond, and make a legend for it."

Now such a task — and doubtless Clara knew

it — was the most acceptable that could have been imposed on Edward Caryl. He was one of that multitude of young gentlemen — limbs, or rather twigs, of the law — whose names appear in gilt letters on the front of Tudor's Buildings, and other places in the vicinity of the Court House, which seem to be the haunt of the gentler as well as the severer Muses. Edward, in the dearth of clients, was accustomed to employ his much leisure in assisting the growth of American Literature, to which good cause he had contributed not a few quires of the finest letter paper, containing some thought, some fancy, some depth of feeling, together with a young writer's abundance of conceits. Sonnets, stanzas of Tennysonian sweetness, tales imbued with German mysticism, versions from Jean Paul, criticisms of the old English poets, and essays smacking of Dialistic philosophy were among his multifarious productions. The editors of the fashionable periodicals were familiar with his autography, and inscribed his name in those brilliant bead rolls of ink-stained celebrity which illustrate the first page of their covers. Nor did Fame withhold her laurel. Hillard had included him among the lights of the New England metropolis, in his Boston Book ; Bryant had found room for some of his stanzas, in the Selections from American Poetry ; and Mr. Griswold, in his recent assem-

blage of the sons and daughters of song, had introduced Edward Caryl into the inner court of the temple, among his fourscore choicest bards. There was a prospect, indeed, of his assuming a still higher and more independent position. Interviews had been held with Ticknor, and a correspondence with the Harpers, respecting a proposed volume, chiefly to consist of Mr. Caryl's fugitive pieces in the magazines, but to be accompanied with a poem of some length, never before published. Not improbably, the public may yet be gratified with this collection.

Meanwhile, we sum up our sketch of Edward Caryl by pronouncing him, though somewhat of a carpet knight in literature, yet no unfavorable specimen of a generation of rising writers, whose spirit is such that we may reasonably expect creditable attempts from all, and good and beautiful results from some. And, it will be observed, Edward was the very man to write pretty legends, at a lady's instance, for an old-fashioned diamond ring. He took the jewel in his hand, and turned it so as to catch its scintillating radiance, as if hoping, in accordance with Clara's suggestion, to light up his fancy with that starlike gleam.

"Shall it be a ballad? — a tale in verse?" he inquired. "Enchanted rings often glisten in old English poetry; I think something may be

done with the subject; but it is fitter for rhyme than prose."

"No, no," said Miss Pemberton, "we will have no more rhyme than just enough for a posy to the ring. You must tell the legend in simple prose; and when it is finished, I will make a little party to hear it read."

The young gentleman promised obedience; and going to his pillow, with his head full of the familiar spirits that used to be worn in rings, watches, and sword hilts, he had the good fortune to possess himself of an available idea in a dream. Connecting this with what he himself chanced to know of the ring's real history, his task was done. Clara Pemberton invited a select few of her friends, all holding the stanchest faith in Edward's genius, and therefore the most genial auditors, if not altogether the fairest critics, that a writer could possibly desire. Blessed be woman for her faculty of admiration, and especially for her tendency to admire with her heart, when man, at most, grants merely a cold approval with his mind!

Drawing his chair beneath the blaze of a solar lamp, Edward Caryl untied a roll of glossy paper, and began as follows: —

THE LEGEND

After the death warrant had been read to the Earl of Essex, and on the evening before his

appointed execution, the Countess of Shrewsbury paid his lordship a visit, and found him, as it appeared, toying childishly with a ring. The diamond that enriched it glittered like a little star, but with a singular tinge of red. The gloomy prison chamber in the Tower, with its deep and narrow windows piercing the walls of stone, was now all that the earl possessed of worldly prospect; so that there was the less wonder that he should look steadfastly into the gem, and moralize upon earth's deceitful splendor, as men in darkness and ruin seldom fail to do. But the shrewd observations of the countess, — an artful and unprincipled woman, — the pretended friend of Essex, but who had come to glut her revenge for a deed of scorn which he himself had forgotten, — her keen eye detected a deeper interest attached to this jewel. Even while expressing his gratitude for her remembrance of a ruined favorite and condemned criminal, the earl's glance reverted to the ring, as if all that remained of time and its affairs were collected within that small golden circlet.

"My dear lord," observed the countess, "there is surely some matter of great moment wherewith this ring is connected, since it so absorbs your mind. A token, it may be, of some fair lady's love, — alas, poor lady, once richest in possessing such a heart! Would you that the jewel be returned to her?"

"The queen! the queen! It was her Majesty's own gift," replied the earl, still gazing into the depths of the gem. "She took it from her finger, and told me, with a smile, that it was an heirloom from her Tudor ancestors, and had once been the property of Merlin, the British wizard, who gave it to the lady of his love. His art had made this diamond the abiding place of a spirit, which, though of fiendish nature, was bound to work only good so long as the ring was an unviolated pledge of love and faith, both with the giver and receiver. But should love prove false, and faith be broken, then the evil spirit would work his own devilish will, until the ring were purified by becoming the medium of some good and holy act, and again the pledge of faithful love. The gem soon lost its virtue; for the wizard was murdered by the very lady to whom he gave it."

"An idle legend!" said the countess.

"It is so," answered Essex, with a melancholy smile. "Yet the queen's favor, of which this ring was the symbol, has proved my ruin. When death is nigh, men converse with dreams and shadows. I have been gazing into the diamond, and fancying — but you will laugh at me — that I might catch a glimpse of the evil spirit there. Do you observe this red glow, — dusky, too, amid all the brightness? It is the token of his presence; and even now, methinks, it

grows redder and duskier, like an angry sunset."

Nevertheless, the earl's manner testified how slight was his credence in the enchanted properties of the ring. But there is a kind of playfulness that comes in moments of despair, when the reality of misfortune, if entirely felt, would crush the soul at once. He now, for a brief space, was lost in thought, while the countess contemplated him with malignant satisfaction.

"This ring," he resumed, in another tone, "alone remains of all that my royal mistress's favor lavished upon her servant. My fortune once shone as brightly as the gem. And now, such a darkness has fallen around me, methinks it would be no marvel if its gleam — the sole light of my prison house — were to be forthwith extinguished inasmuch as my last earthly hope depends upon it."

"How say you, my lord?" asked the Countess of Shrewsbury. "The stone is bright; but there should be strange magic in it, if it can keep your hopes alive, at this sad hour. Alas! these iron bars and ramparts of the Tower are unlike to yield to such a spell."

Essex raised his head involuntarily; for there was something in the countess's tone that disturbed him, although he could not suspect that an enemy had intruded upon the sacred privacy of a prisoner's dungeon, to exult over so

dark a ruin of such once brilliant fortunes. He looked her in the face, but saw nothing to awaken his distrust. It would have required a keener eye than even Cecil's to read the secret of a countenance which had been worn so long in the false light of a court that it was now little better than a mask, telling any story save the true one. The condemned nobleman again bent over the ring, and proceeded : —

" It once had power in it, — this bright gem, — the magic that appertains to the talisman of a great queen's favor. She bade me, if hereafter I should fall into her disgrace, — how deep soever, and whatever might be the crime, — to convey this jewel to her sight, and it should plead for me. Doubtless, with her piercing judgment, she had even then detected the rashness of my nature, and foreboded some such deed as has now brought destruction upon my head. And knowing, too, her own hereditary rigor, she designed, it may be, that the memory of gentler and kindlier hours should soften her heart in my behalf, when my need should be the greatest. I have doubted, — I have distrusted, — yet who can tell, even now, what happy influence this ring might have ? "

" You have delayed full long to show the ring, and plead her Majesty's gracious promise," remarked the countess, — " your state being what it is."

"True," replied the earl; "but for my honor's sake, I was loath to entreat the queen's mercy, while I might hope for life, at least, from the justice of the laws. If, on a trial by my peers, I had been acquitted of meditating violence against her sacred life, then would I have fallen at her feet, and, presenting the jewel, have prayed no other favor than that my love and zeal should be put to the severest test. But now — it were confessing too much — it were cringing too low — to beg the miserable gift of life, on no other score than the tenderness which her Majesty deems me to have forfeited!"

"Yet it is your only hope," said the countess.

"And besides," continued Essex, pursuing his own reflections, "of what avail will be this token of womanly feeling, when, on the other hand, are arrayed the all-prevailing motives of state policy, and the artifices and intrigues of courtiers, to consummate my downfall? Will Cecil or Raleigh suffer her heart to act for itself, even if the spirit of her father were not in her? It is in vain to hope it."

But still Essex gazed at the ring with an absorbed attention, that proved how much hope his sanguine temperament had concentrated here, when there was none else for him in the wide world, save what lay in the compass of that hoop of gold. The spark of brightness within the diamond, which gleamed like an intenser than

earthly fire, was the memorial of his dazzling career. It had not paled with the waning sunshine of his mistress's favor; on the contrary, in spite of its remarkable tinge of dusky red, he fancied that it never shone so brightly. The glow of festal torches, — the blaze of perfumed lamps, —bonfires that had been kindled for him, when he was the darling of the people, — the splendor of the royal court, where he had been the peculiar star, — all seemed to have collected their moral or material glory into the gem, and to burn with a radiance caught from the future as well as gathered from the past. That radiance might break forth again. Bursting from the diamond, into which it was now narrowed, it might beam first upon the gloomy walls of the Tower, — then wider, wider, wider, — till all England, and the seas around her cliffs, should be gladdened with the light. It was such an ecstasy as often ensues after long depression, and has been supposed to precede the circumstances of darkest fate that may befall mortal man. The earl pressed the ring to his heart, as if it were indeed a talisman, the habitation of a spirit, as the queen had playfully assured him, — but a spirit of happier influences than her legend spake of.

"O, could I but make my way to her footstool!" cried he, waving his hand aloft, while he paced the stone pavement of his prison

chamber with an impetuous step. "I might kneel down, indeed, a ruined man, condemned to the block, but how should I rise again? Once more the favorite of Elizabeth! — England's proudest noble! — with such prospects as ambition never aimed at! Why have I tarried so long in this weary dungeon? The ring has power to set me free! The palace wants me! Ho, jailer, unbar the door!"

But then occurred the recollection of the impossibility of obtaining an interview with his fatally estranged mistress, and testing the influence over her affections, which he still flattered himself with possessing. Could he step beyond the limits of his prison, the world would be all sunshine; but here was only gloom and death.

"Alas!" said he slowly and sadly, letting his head fall upon his hands. "I die for the lack of one blessed word."

The Countess of Shrewsbury, herself forgotten amid the earl's gorgeous visions, had watched him with an aspect that could have betrayed nothing to the most suspicious observer; unless that it was too calm for humanity, while witnessing the flutterings, as it were, of a generous heart in the death agony. She now approached him.

"My good lord," she said, "what mean you to do?"

"Nothing,—my deeds are done!" replied

he despondingly. "Yet, had a fallen favorite any friends, I would entreat one of them to lay this ring at her Majesty's feet; albeit with little hope, save that, hereafter, it might remind her that poor Essex, once far too highly favored, was at last too severely dealt with."

"I will be that friend," said the countess. "There is no time to be lost. Trust this precious ring with me. This very night the queen's eye shall rest upon it; nor shall the efficacy of my poor words be wanting, to strengthen the impression which it will doubtless make."

The earl's first impulse was to hold out the ring. But looking at the countess, as she bent forward to receive it, he fancied that the red glow of the gem tinged all her face, and gave it an ominous expression. Many passages of past times recurred to his memory. A preternatural insight, perchance caught from approaching death, threw its momentary gleam, as from a meteor, all round his position.

"Countess," he said, "I know not wherefore I hesitate, being in a plight so desperate, and having so little choice of friends. But have you looked into your own heart? Can you perform this office with the truth — the earnestness — the zeal — even to tears and agony of spirit — wherewith the holy gift of human life should be pleaded for? Woe be unto you, should you undertake this task, and deal towards me other-

wise than with utmost faith! For your own soul's sake, and as you would have peace at your death hour, consider well in what spirit you receive this ring!"

The countess did not shrink.

"My lord! — my good lord!" — she exclaimed, "wrong not a woman's heart by these suspicions. You might choose another messenger; but who, save a lady of her bedchamber, can obtain access to the queen at this untimely hour? It is for your life, — for your life — else I would not renew my offer."

"Take the ring," said the earl.

"Believe that it shall be in the queen's hands before the lapse of another hour," replied the countess, as she received this sacred trust of life and death. "To-morrow morning look for the result of my intercession."

She departed. Again the earl's hopes rose high. Dreams visited his slumber, not of the sable-decked scaffold in the Tower yard, but of canopies of state, obsequious courtiers, pomp, splendor, the smile of the once more gracious queen, and a light beaming from the magic gem, which illuminated his whole future.

History records how foully the Countess of Shrewsbury betrayed the trust which Essex, in his utmost need, confided to her. She kept the ring, and stood in the presence of Elizabeth, that night, without one attempt to soften her

stern hereditary temper in behalf of the former favorite. The next day the earl's noble head rolled upon the scaffold. On her deathbed, tortured, at last, with a sense of the dreadful guilt which she had taken upon her soul, the wicked countess sent for Elizabeth, revealed the story of the ring, and besought forgiveness for her treachery. But the queen, still obdurate, even while remorse for past obduracy was tugging at her heartstrings, shook the dying woman in her bed, as if struggling with death for the privilege of wreaking her revenge and spite. The spirit of the countess passed away, to undergo the justice, or receive the mercy, of a higher tribunal; and tradition says, that the fatal ring was found upon her breast, where it had imprinted a dark red circle, resembling the effect of the intensest heat. The attendants, who prepared the body for burial, shuddered, whispering one to another, that the ring must have derived its heat from the glow of infernal fire. They left it on her breast, in the coffin, and it went with that guilty woman to the tomb.

Many years afterward, when the church that contained the monuments of the Shrewsbury family was desecrated by Cromwell's soldiers, they broke open the ancestral vaults, and stole whatever was valuable from the noble personages who reposed there. Merlin's antique ring passed into the possession of a stout sergeant

of the Ironsides, who thus became subject to the influences of the evil spirit that still kept his abode within the gem's enchanted depths. The sergeant was soon slain in battle, thus transmitting the ring, though without any legal form of testament, to a gay cavalier, who forthwith pawned it, and expended the money in liquor, which speedily brought him to the grave. We next catch the sparkle of the magic diamond at various epochs of the merry reign of Charles the Second. But its sinister fortune still attended it. From whatever hand this ring of portent came, and whatever finger it encircled, ever it was the pledge of deceit between man and man, or man and woman, of faithless vows and unhallowed passion ; and whether to lords and ladies or to village maids, — for sometimes it found its way so low, — still it brought nothing but sorrow and disgrace. No purifying deed was done, to drive the fiend from his bright home in this little star. Again, we hear of it, at a later period, when Sir Robert Walpole bestowed the ring, among far richer jewels, on the lady of a British legislator, whose political honor he wished to undermine. Many a dismal and unhappy tale might be wrought out of its other adventures. All this while, its ominous tinge of dusky red had been deepening and darkening, until, if laid upon white paper, it cast the mingled hue of night and blood, strangely illu-

minated with scintillating light, in a circle round about. But this peculiarity only made it the more valuable.

Alas, the fatal ring! When shall its dark secret be discovered, and the doom of ill, inherited from one possessor to another, be finally revoked?

The legend now crosses the Atlantic, and comes down to our own immediate time. In a certain church of our city, not many evenings ago, there was a contribution for a charitable object. A fervid preacher had poured out his whole soul in a rich and tender discourse, which had at least excited the tears, and perhaps the more effectual sympathy, of a numerous audience. While the choristers sang sweetly, and the organ poured forth its melodious thunder, the deacons passed up and down the aisles and along the galleries, presenting their mahogany boxes, in which each person deposited whatever sum he deemed it safe to lend to the Lord, in aid of human wretchedness. Charity became audible, — chink, chink, chink, — as it fell, drop by drop, into the common receptacle. There was a hum, — a stir, — the subdued bustle of people putting their hands into their pockets; while, ever and anon, a vagrant coin fell upon the floor and rolled away, with long reverberation, into some inscrutable corner.

At length, all having been favored with an op-

portunity to be generous, the two deacons placed their boxes on the communion table, and thence, at the conclusion of the services, removed them into the vestry. Here these good old gentlemen sat down together, to reckon the accumulated treasure.

"Fie, fie, Brother Tilton," said Deacon Trott, peeping into Deacon Tilton's box, "what a heap of copper you have picked up! Really, for an old man, you must have had a heavy job to lug it along. Copper! copper! copper! Do people expect to get admittance into heaven at the price of a few coppers?"

"Don't wrong them, brother," answered Deacon Tilton, a simple and kindly old man. "Copper may do more for one person than gold will for another. In the galleries, where I present my box, we must not expect such a harvest as you gather among the gentry in the broad aisle, and all over the floor of the church. My people are chiefly poor mechanics and laborers, sailors, seamstresses, and servant maids, with a most uncomfortable intermixture of roguish schoolboys."

"Well, well," said Deacon Trott; "but there is a great deal, Brother Tilton, in the method of presenting a contribution box. It is a knack that comes by nature, or not at all."

They now proceeded to sum up the avails of the evening, beginning with the receipts

of Deacon Trott. In good sooth, that worthy personage had reaped an abundant harvest, in which he prided himself no less, apparently, than if every dollar had been contributed from his own individual pocket. Had the good deacon been meditating a jaunt to Texas, the treasures of the mahogany box might have sent him on his way rejoicing. There were bank notes; mostly, it is true, of the smallest denomination in the giver's pocketbook, yet making a goodly average upon the whole. The most splendid contribution was a check for a hundred dollars, bearing the name of a distinguished merchant, whose liberality was duly celebrated in the newspapers of the next day. No less than seven half-eagles, together with an English sovereign, glittered amidst an indiscriminate heap of silver; the box being polluted with nothing of the copper kind, except a single bright new cent, wherewith a little boy had performed his first charitable act.

"Very well! very well indeed!" said Deacon Trott self-approvingly. "A handsome evening's work! And now, Brother Tilton, let 's see whether you can match it." Here was a sad contrast! They poured forth Deacon Tilton's treasure upon the table, and it really seemed as if the whole copper coinage of the country, together with an amazing quantity of shopkeeper's tokens, and English and Irish

halfpence, mostly of base metal, had been congregated into the box. There was a very substantial pencil case and the semblance of a shilling; but the latter proved to be made of tin, and the former of German silver. A gilded brass button was doing duty as a gold coin, and a folded shop bill had assumed the character of a bank note. But Deacon Tilton's feelings were much revived by the aspect of another bank note, new and crisp, adorned with beautiful engravings, and stamped with the indubitable word TWENTY, in large black letters. Alas! it was a counterfeit. In short, the poor old deacon was no less unfortunate than those who trade with fairies, and whose gains are sure to be transformed into dried leaves, pebbles, and other valuables of that kind.

"I believe the Evil One is in the box," said he, with some vexation.

"Well done, Deacon Tilton!" cried his Brother Trott, with a hearty laugh. "You ought to have a statue in copper."

"Never mind, brother," replied the good deacon, recovering his temper. "I 'll bestow ten dollars from my own pocket, and may Heaven's blessing go along with it. But look! what do you call this?"

Under the copper mountain, which it had cost them so much toil to remove, lay an antique ring! It was enriched with a diamond, which,

so soon as it caught the light, began to twinkle and glimmer, emitting the whitest and purest lustre that could possibly be conceived. It was as brilliant as if some magician had condensed the brightest star in heaven into a compass fit to be set in a ring, for a lady's delicate finger.

"How is this?" said Deacon Trott, examining it carefully, in the expectation of finding it as worthless as the rest of his colleague's treasure. "Why, upon my word, this seems to be a real diamond, and of the purest water. Whence could it have come?"

"Really, I cannot tell," quoth Deacon Tilton, "for my spectacles were so misty that all faces looked alike. But now I remember, there was a flash of light came from the box, at one moment; but it seemed a dusky red, instead of a pure white, like the sparkle of this gem. Well, the ring will make up for the copper; but I wish the giver had thrown its history into the box along with it."

It has been our good luck to recover a portion of that history. After transmitting misfortune from one possessor to another, ever since the days of British Merlin, the identical ring which Queen Elizabeth gave to the Earl of Essex was finally thrown into the contribution box of a New England church. The two deacons deposited it in the glass case of a fashionable jeweller, of whom it was purchased by the humble

rehearser of this legend, in the hope that it may be allowed to sparkle on a fair lady's finger. Purified from the foul fiend, so long its inhabitant, by a deed of unostentatious charity, and now made the symbol of faithful and devoted love, the gentle bosom of its new possessor need fear no sorrow from its influence.

"Very pretty! — Beautiful! — How original! — How sweetly written! — What nature! — What imagination! — What power! — What pathos! — What exquisite humor!" — were the exclamations of Edward Caryl's kind and generous auditors, at the conclusion of the legend.

"It is a pretty tale," said Miss Pemberton, who, conscious that her praise was to that of all others as a diamond to a pebble, was therefore the less liberal in awarding it. "It is really a pretty tale, and very proper for any of the Annuals. But, Edward, your moral does not satisfy me. What thought did you embody in the ring?"

"O Clara, this is too bad!" replied Edward, with a half-reproachful smile. "You know that I can never separate the idea from the symbol in which it manifests itself. However, we may suppose the Gem to be the human Heart, and the Evil Spirit to be Falsehood, which, in one guise or another, is the fiend that causes all the sorrow

and trouble in the world. I beseech you to let this suffice."

"It shall," said Clara kindly. "And, believe me, whatever the world may say of the story, I prize it far above the diamond which enkindled your imagination."

AN OLD WOMAN'S TALE

IN the house where I was born, there used to be an old woman crouching all day long over the kitchen fire, with her elbows on her knees and her feet in the ashes. Once in a while she took a turn at the spit, and she never lacked a coarse gray stocking in her lap, the foot about half finished; it tapered away with her own waning life, and she knit the toe stitch on the day of her death. She made it her serious business and sole amusement to tell me stories at any time from morning till night, in a mumbling, toothless voice, as I sat on a log of wood, grasping her check apron in both my hands. Her personal memory included the better part of a hundred years, and she had strangely jumbled her own experience and observation with those of many old people who died in her young days; so that she might have been taken for a contemporary of Queen Elizabeth, or of John Rogers in the Primer. There are a thousand of her traditions lurking in the corners and by-places of my mind, some more marvellous than what is to follow, some less so, and a few not marvellous in the least, all of which I should like to repeat, if I were as happy as she in hav-

ing a listener. But I am humble enough to own, that I do not deserve a listener half so well as that old toothless woman, whose narratives possessed an excellence attributable neither to herself nor to any single individual. Her ground plots, seldom within the widest scope of probability, were filled up with homely and natural incidents, the gradual accretions of a long course of years, and fiction hid its grotesque extravagance in this garb of truth, like the Devil (an appropriate simile, for the old woman supplies it) disguising himself, cloven foot and all, in mortal attire. These tales generally referred to her birthplace, a village in the valley of the Connecticut, the aspect of which she impressed with great vividness on my fancy. The houses in that tract of country, long a wild and dangerous frontier, were rendered defensible by a strength of architecture that has preserved many of them till our own times, and I cannot describe the sort of pleasure with which, two summers since, I rode through the little town in question, while one object after another rose familiarly to my eye, like successive portions of a dream becoming realized. Among other things equally probable, she was wont to assert that all the inhabitants of this village (at certain intervals, but whether of twenty-five or fifty years, or a whole century, remained a disputable point) were subject to a simultaneous slum-

ber, continuing one hour's space. When that mysterious time arrived, the parson snored over his half-written sermon, though it were Saturday night and no provision made for the morrow, — the mother's eyelids closed as she bent over her infant, and no childish cry awakened, — the watcher at the bed of mortal sickness slumbered upon the death pillow, — and the dying man anticipated his sleep of ages by one as deep and dreamless. To speak emphatically, there was a soporific influence throughout the village, stronger than if every mother's son and daughter were reading a dull story; notwithstanding which the old woman professed to hold the substance of the ensuing account from one of those principally concerned in it.

One moonlight summer evening, a young man and a girl sat down together in the open air. They were distant relatives, sprung from a stock once wealthy, but of late years so poverty-stricken, that David had not a penny to pay the marriage fee, if Esther should consent to wed. The seat they had chosen was in an open grove of elm and walnut trees, at a right angle of the road; a spring of diamond water just bubbled into the moonlight beside them, and then whimpered away through the bushes and long grass, in search of a neighboring mill stream. The nearest house (situate within

twenty yards of them, and the residence of their great-grandfather in his lifetime) was a venerable old edifice, crowned with many high and narrow peaks, all overrun by innumerable creeping plants, which hung curling about the roof like a nice young wig on an elderly gentleman's head. Opposite to this establishment was a tavern, with a well and horse-trough before it, and a low green bank running along the left side of the door. Thence, the road went onward, curving scarce perceptibly, through the village, divided in the midst by a narrow lane of verdure, and bounded on each side by a grassy strip of twice its own breadth. The houses had generally an odd look. Here, the moonlight tried to get a glimpse of one, a rough old heap of ponderous timber, which, ashamed of its dilapidated aspect, was hiding behind a great thick tree; the lower story of the next had sunk almost under ground, as if the poor little house were a-weary of the world, and retiring into the seclusion of its own cellar; farther on stood one of the few recent structures, thrusting its painted face conspicuously into the street, with an evident idea that it was the fairest thing there. About midway in the village was a gristmill, partly concealed by the descent of the ground towards the stream which turned its wheel. At the southern extremity, just so far distant that the window panes dazzled into each other, rose

the meeting-house, a dingy old barnlike building, with an enormously disproportioned steeple sticking up straight into heaven, as high as the Tower of Babel, and the cause of nearly as much confusion in its day. This steeple, it must be understood, was an afterthought, and its addition to the main edifice, when the latter had already begun to decay, had excited a vehement quarrel, and almost a schism in the church, some fifty years before. Here the road wound down a hill, and was seen no more, the remotest object in view being the graveyard gate, beyond the meeting-house. The youthful pair sat hand in hand beneath the trees, and for several moments they had not spoken, because the breeze was hushed, the brook scarce tinkled, the leaves had ceased their rustling, and everything lay motionless and silent as if Nature were composing herself to slumber.

"What a beautiful night it is, Esther!" remarked David, somewhat drowsily.

"Very beautiful," answered the girl, in the same tone.

"But how still!" continued David.

"Ah, too still!" said Esther, with a faint shudder, like a modest leaf when the wind kisses it.

Perhaps they fell asleep together, and, united as their spirits were by close and tender sympathies, the same strange dream might have

wrapped them in its shadowy arms. But they conceived, at the time, that they still remained wakeful by the spring of bubbling water, looking down through the village, and all along the moon-lighted road, and at the queer old houses, and at the trees, which thrust their great twisted branches almost into the windows. There was only a sort of mistiness over their minds, like the smoky air of an early autumn night. At length, without any vivid astonishment, they became conscious that a great many people were either entering the village or already in the street; but whether they came from the meeting-house, or from a little beyond it, or where the devil they came from, was more than could be determined. Certainly a crowd of people seemed to be there, men, women, and children, all of whom were yawning and rubbing their eyes, stretching their limbs, and staggering from side to side of the road, as if but partially awakened from a sound slumber. Sometimes they stood stock-still, with their hands over their brows to shade their sight from the moonbeams. As they drew near, most of their countenances appeared familiar to Esther and David, possessing the peculiar features of families in the village, and that general air and aspect by which a person would recognize his own townsmen in the remotest ends of the earth. But though the whole multitude might have been taken, in the mass, for

neighbors and acquaintances, there was not a single individual whose exact likeness they had ever before seen. It was a noticeable circumstance, also, that the newest-fashioned garment on the backs of these people might have been worn by the great-grandparents of the existing generation. There was one figure behind all the rest, and not yet near enough to be perfectly distinguished.

"Where on earth, David, do all these odd people come from?" said Esther, with a lazy inclination to laugh.

"Nowhere on earth, Esther," replied David, unknowing why he said so.

As they spoke, the strangers showed some symptoms of disquietude, and looked towards the fountain for an instant, but immediately appeared to assume their own trains of thought and previous purposes. They now separated to different parts of the village, with a readiness that implied intimate local knowledge; and it may be worthy of remark, that, though they were evidently loquacious among themselves, neither their footsteps nor their voices reached the ears of the beholders. Wherever there was a venerable old house, of fifty years' standing and upwards, surrounded by its elm or walnut trees, with its dark and weather-beaten barn, its well, its orchard and stone walls, all ancient and all in good repair around it, there a little group

of these people assembled. Such parties were mostly composed of an aged man and woman, with the younger members of a family; their faces were full of joy, so deep that it assumed the shade of melancholy; they pointed to each other the minutest objects about the homesteads, things in their hearts, and were now comparing them with the originals. But where hollow places by the wayside, grass-grown and uneven, with unsightly chimneys rising ruinous in the midst, gave indications of a fallen dwelling and of hearths long cold, there did a few of the strangers sit them down on the mouldering beams, and on the yellow moss that had overspread the doorstone. The men folded their arms, sad and speechless; the women wrung their hands with a more vivid expression of grief; and the little children tottered to their knees, shrinking away from the open grave of domestic love. And wherever a recent edifice reared its white and flashy front on the foundation of an old one, there a gray-haired man might be seen to shake his staff in anger at it, while his aged dame and their offspring appeared to join in their maledictions, forming a fearful picture in the ghostly moonlight. While these scenes were passing, the one figure in the rear of all the rest was descending the hollow towards the mill, and the eyes of David and Esther were drawn thence to a pair with whom they could fully

sympathize. It was a youth in a sailor's dress and a pale slender maiden, who met each other with a sweet embrace in the middle of the street.

"How long it must be since they parted!" observed David.

"Fifty years at least," said Esther.

They continued to gaze with wondering calmness and quiet interest, as the dream (if such it were) unrolled its quaint and motley semblance before them, and their notice was now attracted by several little knots of people apparently engaged in conversation. Of these one of the earliest collected and most characteristic was near the tavern, the persons who composed it being seated on the low green bank along the left side of the door. A conspicuous figure here was a fine corpulent old fellow in his shirt sleeves and flame-colored breeches, and with a stained white apron over his paunch, beneath which he held his hands, and wherewith at times he wiped his ruddy face. The stately decrepitude of one of his companions, the scar of an Indian tomahawk on his crown, and especially his worn buff coat, were appropriate marks of a veteran belonging to an old Provincial garrison, now deaf to the roll call. Another showed his rough face under a tarry hat and wore a pair of wide trousers, like an ancient mariner who had tossed away his youth upon the sea, and was returned, hoary and weather-

beaten, to his inland home. There was also a thin young man, carelessly dressed, who ever and anon cast a sad look towards the pale maiden above mentioned. With these there sat a hunter and one or two others, and they were soon joined by a miller, who came upward from the dusty mill, his coat as white as if besprinkled with powdered starlight. All these (by the aid of jests, which might indeed be old, but had not been recently repeated) waxed very merry, and it was rather strange that just as their sides shook with the heartiest laughter, they appeared greatly like a group of shadows flickering in the moonshine. Four personages, very different from these, stood in front of the large house with its periwig of creeping plants. One was a little elderly figure, distinguished by the gold on his three-cornered hat and sky-blue coat, and by the seal of arms annexed to his great gold watch chain; his air and aspect befitted a justice of peace and county major, and all earth's pride and pomposity were squeezed into this small gentleman of five feet high. The next in importance was a grave person of sixty or seventy years, whose black suit and band sufficiently indicated his character, and the polished baldness of whose head was worthy of a famous preacher in the village, half a century before, who had made wigs a subject of pulpit denunciation. The two other figures, both clad

in dark gray, showed the sobriety of deacons: one was ridiculously tall and thin, like a man of ordinary bulk infinitely produced, as the mathematicians say; while the brevity and thickness of his colleague seemed a compression of the same man. These four talked with great earnestness, and their gestures intimated that they had revived the ancient dispute about the meeting-house steeple. The grave person in black spoke with composed solemnity, as if he were addressing a Synod; the short deacon grunted out occasional sentences, as brief as himself; his tall brother drew the long thread of his argument through the whole discussion, and (reasoning from analogy) his voice must indubitably have been small and squeaking. But the little old man in gold lace was evidently scorched by his own red-hot eloquence; he bounced from one to another, shook his cane at the steeple, at the two deacons, and almost in the parson's face, stamping with his foot fiercely enough to break a hole through the very earth, — though, indeed, it could not exactly be said that the green grass bent beneath him. The figure noticed as coming behind all the rest had now surmounted the ascent from the mill, and proved to be an elderly lady with something in her hand.

"Why does she walk so slow?" asked David.

"Don't you see she is lame?" said Esther.

This gentlewoman, whose infirmity had kept her so far in the rear of the crowd, now came hobbling on, glided unobserved by the polemic group, and paused on the left brink of the fountain, within a few feet of the two spectators. She was a magnificent old dame as ever mortal eye beheld. Her spangled shoes and gold-clocked stockings shone gloriously within the spacious circle of a red hoop petticoat, which swelled to the very point of explosion, and was bedecked all over with embroidery a little tarnished. Above the petticoat, and parting in front so as to display it to the best advantage, was a figured blue damask gown. A wide and stiff ruff encircled her neck; a cap of the finest muslin, though rather dingy, covered her head; and her nose was bestridden by a pair of gold-bowed spectacles with enormous glasses. But the old lady's face was pinched, sharp, and sallow, wearing a niggardly and avaricious expression, and forming an odd contrast to the splendor of her attire, as did likewise the implement which she held in her hand. It was a sort of iron shovel (by housewives termed a "slice"), such as is used in clearing the oven, and with this, selecting a spot between a walnut-tree and the fountain, the good dame made an earnest attempt to dig. The tender sods, however, possessed a strange impenetrability. They resisted her efforts like a quarry of living granite,

and, losing her breath, she cast down the shovel and seemed to bemoan herself most piteously, gnashing her teeth (what few she had) and wringing her thin yellow hands. Then, apparently with new hope, she resumed her toil, which still had the same result, — a circumstance the less surprising to David and Esther because at times they would catch the moonlight shining through the old woman and dancing in the fountain beyond. The little man in gold lace now happened to see her, and made his approach on tiptoe.

"How hard this elderly lady works!" remarked David.

"Go and help her, David," said Esther compassionately.

As their drowsy voices spoke, both the old woman and the pompous little figure behind her lifted their eyes, and for a moment they regarded the youth and damsel with something like kindness and affection; which, however, were dim and uncertain, and passed away almost immediately. The old woman again betook herself to the shovel, but was startled by a hand suddenly laid upon her shoulder; she turned round in great trepidation, and beheld the dignitary in the blue coat; then followed an embrace of such closeness as would indicate no remoter connection than matrimony between these two decorous persons. The gentleman next

pointed to the shovel, appearing to inquire the purpose of his lady's occupation; while she as evidently parried his interrogatories, maintaining a demure and sanctified visage, as every good woman ought, in similar cases. Howbeit, she could not forbear looking askew, behind her spectacles, towards the spot of stubborn turf. All the while, their figures had a strangeness in them, and it seemed as if some cunning jeweller had made their golden ornaments of the yellowest of the setting sunbeams, and that the blue of their garments was brought from the dark sky near the moon, and that the gentleman's silk waistcoat was the bright side of a fiery cloud, and the lady's scarlet petticoat a remnant of the blush of morning, — and that they both were two unrealities of colored air. But now there was a sudden movement throughout the multitude. The squire drew forth a watch as large as the dial on the famous steeple, looked at the warning hands, and got him gone, nor could his lady tarry; the party at the tavern door took to their heels, headed by the fat man in the flaming breeches; the tall deacon stalked away immediately, and the short deacon waddled after, making four steps to the yard; the mothers called their children about them and set forth, with a gentle and sad glance behind. Like cloudy fantasies that hurry by a viewless impulse from the sky, they all were

fled, and the wind rose up and followed them with a strange moaning down the lonely street. Now whither these people went is more than may be told ; only David and Esther seemed to see the shadowy splendor of the ancient dame, as she lingered in the moonshine at the graveyard gate, gazing backward to the fountain.

"O Esther! I have had such a dream!" cried David, starting up and rubbing his eyes.

"And I such another!" answered Esther, gaping till her pretty red lips formed a circle.

"About an old woman with gold-bowed spectacles," continued David.

"And a scarlet hoop petticoat," added Esther. They now stared in each other's eyes, with great astonishment and some little fear. After a thoughtful moment or two, David drew a long breath and stood upright.

"If I live till to-morrow morning," said he, "I 'll see what may be buried between that tree and the spring of water."

"And why not to-night, David?" asked Esther; for she was a sensible little girl, and bethought herself that the matter might as well be done in secrecy.

David felt the propriety of the remark, and looked round for the means of following her advice. The moon shone brightly on something that rested against the side of the old house, and, on a nearer view, it proved to be an

iron shovel, bearing a singular resemblance to that which they had seen in their dreams. He used it with better success than the old woman, the soil giving way so freely to his efforts that he had soon scooped a hole as large as the basin of the spring. Suddenly, he poked his head down to the very bottom of this cavity. "Oho! — what have we here?" cried David.

ALICE DOANE'S APPEAL

ON a pleasant afternoon of June, it was my good fortune to be the companion of two young ladies in a walk. The direction of our course being left to me, I led them neither to Legge's Hill, nor to the Cold Spring, nor to the rude shores and old batteries of the Neck, nor yet to Paradise ; though if the latter place were rightly named, my fair friends would have been at home there. We reached the outskirts of the town, and, turning aside from a street of tanners and curriers, began to ascend a hill, which at a distance, by its dark slope and the even line of its summit, resembled a green rampart along the road. It was less steep than its aspect threatened. The eminence formed part of an extensive tract of pasture land, and was traversed by cowpaths in various directions; but, strange to tell, though the whole slope and summit were of a peculiarly deep green, scarce a blade of grass was visible from the base upward. This deceitful verdure was occasioned by a plentiful crop of "wood-wax," which wears the same dark and glossy green throughout the summer, except at one short period, when it puts forth a profusion of yellow blossoms. At that season,

to a distant spectator, the hill appears absolutely overlaid with gold, or covered with a glory of sunshine, even beneath a clouded sky. But the curious wanderer on the hill will perceive that all the grass, and everything that should nourish man or beast, has been destroyed by this vile and ineradicable weed: its tufted roots make the soil their own, and permit nothing else to vegetate among them; so that a physical curse may be said to have blasted the spot, where guilt and frenzy consummated the most execrable scene that our history blushes to record. For this was the field where Superstition won her darkest triumph; the high place where our fathers set up their shame, to the mournful gaze of generations far remote. The dust of martyrs was beneath our feet. We stood on Gallows Hill.

For my own part, I have often courted the historic influence of the spot. But it is singular how few come on pilgrimage to this famous hill; how many spend their lives almost at its base, and never once obey the summons of the shadowy past, as it beckons them to the summit. Till a year or two since, this portion of our history had been very imperfectly written, and, as we are not a people of legend or tradition, it was not every citizen of our ancient town that could tell, within half a century, so much as the date of the witchcraft delusion. Recently, in-

deed, an historian has treated the subject in a manner that will keep his name alive, in the only desirable connection with the errors of our ancestry, by converting the hill of their disgrace into an honorable monument of his own antiquarian lore, and of that better wisdom, which draws the moral while it tells the tale. But we are a people of the present, and have no heartfelt interest in the olden time. Every fifth of November, in commemoration of they know not what, or rather without an idea beyond the momentary blaze, the young men scare the town with bonfires on this haunted height, but never dream of paying funeral honors to those who died so wrongfully, and, without a coffin or a prayer, were buried here.

Though, with feminine susceptibility, my companions caught all the melancholy associations of the scene, yet these could but imperfectly overcome the gayety of girlish spirits. Their emotions came and went with quick vicissitude, and sometimes combined to form a peculiar and delicious excitement, the mirth brightening the gloom into a sunny shower of feeling, and a rainbow in the mind. My own more sombre mood was tinged by theirs. With now a merry word and next a sad one, we trod among the tangled weeds, and almost hoped that our feet would sink into the hollow of a witch's grave. Such vestiges were to be found

within the memory of man, but have vanished now, and with them, I believe, all traces of the precise spot of the executions. On the long and broad ridge of the eminence, there is no very decided elevation of any one point, nor other prominent marks, except the decayed stumps of two trees, standing near each other, and here and there the rocky substance of the hill, peeping just above the wood-wax.

There are few such prospects of town and village, woodland and cultivated field, steeples and country seats, as we beheld from this unhappy spot. No blight had fallen on old Essex; all was prosperity and riches, healthfully distributed. Before us lay our native town, extending from the foot of the hill to the harbor, level as a chessboard, embraced by two arms of the sea, and filling the whole peninsula with a close assemblage of wooden roofs, overtopped by many a spire, and intermixed with frequent heaps of verdure, where trees threw up their shade from unseen trunks. Beyond was the bay and its islands, almost the only objects, in a country unmarked by strong natural features, on which time and human toil had produced no change. Retaining these portions of the scene, and also the peaceful glory and tender gloom of the declining sun, we threw, in imagination, a veil of deep forest over the land, and pictured a few scattered villages, and this old town itself

a village, as when the prince of hell bore sway there. The idea thus gained of its former aspect, its quaint edifices standing far apart, with peaked roofs and projecting stories, and its single meeting-house pointing up a tall spire in the midst; the vision, in short, of the town in 1692, served to introduce a wondrous tale of those old times.

I had brought the manuscript in my pocket. It was one of a series written years ago, when my pen, now sluggish and perhaps feeble, because I have not much to hope or fear, was driven by stronger external motives, and a more passionate impulse within, than I am fated to feel again. Three or four of these tales had appeared in the 'Token, after a long time and various adventures, but had encumbered me with no troublesome notoriety, even in my birthplace. One great heap had met a brighter destiny: they had fed the flames; thoughts meant to delight the world and endure for ages had perished in a moment, and stirred not a single heart but mine. The story now to be introduced, and another, chanced to be in kinder custody at the time, and thus, by no conspicuous merits of their own, escaped destruction.

The ladies, in consideration that I had never before intruded my performances on them, by any but the legitimate medium, through the press, consented to hear me read. I made them

sit down on a moss-grown rock, close by the spot where we chose to believe that the death tree had stood. After a little hesitation on my part, caused by a dread of renewing my acquaintance with fantasies that had lost their charm in the ceaseless flux of mind, I began the tale, which opened darkly with the discovery of a murder.

A hundred years, and nearly half that time, have elapsed since the body of a murdered man was found, at about the distance of three miles, on the old road to Boston. He lay in a solitary spot, on the bank of a small lake, which the severe frost of December had covered with a sheet of ice. Beneath this, it seemed to have been the intention of the murderer to conceal his victim in a chill and watery grave, the ice being deeply hacked, perhaps with the weapon that had slain him, though its solidity was too stubborn for the patience of a man with blood upon his hand. The corpse therefore reclined on the earth, but was separated from the road by a thick growth of dwarf pines. There had been a slight fall of snow during the night, and as if Nature were shocked at the deed, and strove to hide it with her frozen tears, a little drifted heap had partly buried the body, and lay deepest over the pale dead face. An early traveller,

whose dog had led him to the spot, ventured to uncover the features, but was affrighted by their expression. A look of evil and scornful triumph had hardened on them, and made death so lifelike and so terrible, that the beholder at once took flight, as swiftly as if the stiffened corpse would rise up and follow.

I read on, and identified the body as that of a young man, a stranger in the country, but resident during several preceding months in the town which lay at our feet. The story described, at some length, the excitement caused by the murder, the unavailing quest after the perpetrator, the funeral ceremonies, and other commonplace matters, in the course of which I brought forward the personages who were to move among the succeeding events. They were but three. A young man and his sister: the former characterized by a diseased imagination and morbid feelings; the latter, beautiful and virtuous, and instilling something of her own excellence into the wild heart of her brother, but not enough to cure the deep taint of his nature. The third person was a wizard, — a small, gray, withered man, with fiendish ingenuity in devising evil, and superhuman power to execute it, but senseless as an idiot and feebler than a child to all better purposes. The central scene of the story was an interview between this wretch and Leonard Doane, in the wizard's hut, situated beneath a

range of rocks at some distance from the town. They sat beside a smouldering fire, while a tempest of wintry rain was beating on the roof. The young man spoke of the closeness of the tie which united him and Alice, the consecrated fervor of their affection from childhood upwards, their sense of lonely sufficiency to each other, because they only of their race had escaped death, in a night attack by the Indians. He related his discovery or suspicion of a secret sympathy between his sister and Walter Brome, and told how a distempered jealousy had maddened him. In the following passage, I threw a glimmering light on the mystery of the tale.

"Searching," continued Leonard, "into the breast of Walter Brome, I at length found a cause why Alice must inevitably love him. For he was my very counterpart! I compared his mind by each individual portion, and as a whole, with mine. There was a resemblance from which I shrunk with sickness, and loathing, and horror, as if my own features had come and stared upon me in a solitary place, or had met me in struggling through a crowd. Nay! the very same thoughts would often express themselves in the same words from our lips, proving a hateful sympathy in our secret souls. His education, indeed, in the cities of the old world, and mine in this rude wilderness, had wrought a superficial difference. The evil of his character,

also, had been strengthened and rendered prominent by a reckless and ungoverned life, while mine had been softened and purified by the gentle and holy nature of Alice. But my soul had been conscious of the germ of all the fierce and deep passions, and of all the many varieties of wickedness, which accident had brought to their full maturity in him. Nor will I deny that, in the accursed one, I could see the withered blossom of every virtue which, by a happier culture, had been made to bring forth fruit in me. Now, here was a man whom Alice might love with all the strength of sisterly affection, added to that impure passion which alone engrosses all the heart. The stranger would have more than the love which had been gathered to me from the many graves of our household — and I be desolate!"

Leonard Doane went on to describe the insane hatred that had kindled his heart into a volume of hellish flame. It appeared, indeed, that his jealousy had grounds, so far as that Walter Brome had actually sought the love of Alice, who also had betrayed an undefinable but powerful interest in the unknown youth. The latter, in spite of his passion for Alice, seemed to return the loathful antipathy of her brother; the similarity of their dispositions made them like joint possessors of an individual na-

ture, which could not become wholly the property of one, unless by the extinction of the other. At last, with the same devil in each bosom, they chanced to meet, they two, on a lonely road. While Leonard spoke, the wizard had sat listening to what he already knew, yet with tokens of pleasurable interest, manifested by flashes of expression across his vacant features, by grisly smiles, and by a word here and there, mysteriously filling up some void in the narrative. But when the young man told how Walter Brome had taunted him with indubitable proofs of the shame of Alice, and, before the triumphant sneer could vanish from his face, had died by her brother's hand, the wizard laughed aloud. Leonard started, but just then a gust of wind came down the chimney, forming itself into a close resemblance of the slow, unvaried laughter, by which he had been interrupted. "I was deceived," thought he; and thus pursued his fearful story.

"I trod out his accursed soul, and knew that he was dead; for my spirit bounded as if a chain had fallen from it and left me free. But the burst of exulting certainty soon fled, and was succeeded by a torpor over my brain and a dimness before my eyes, with the sensation of one who struggles through a dream. So I bent down over the body of Walter Brome, gazing into his

face, and striving to make my soul glad with the thought that he, in very truth, lay dead before me. I know not what space of time I had thus stood, nor how the vision came. But it seemed to me that the irrevocable years since childhood had rolled back, and a scene, that had long been confused and broken in my memory, arrayed itself with all its first distinctness. Methought I stood a weeping infant by my father's hearth, — by the cold and blood-stained hearth where he lay dead. I heard the childish wail of Alice, and my own cry arose with hers, as we beheld the features of our parent, fierce with the strife and distorted with the pain in which his spirit had passed away. As I gazed, a cold wind whistled by, and waved my father's hair. Immediately I stood again in the lonesome road, no more a sinless child, but a man of blood, whose tears were falling fast over the face of his dead enemy. But the delusion was not wholly gone ; that face still wore a likeness of my father ; and because my soul shrank from the fixed glare of the eyes, I bore the body to the lake, and would have buried it there. But before his icy sepulchre was hewn I heard the voices of two travellers, and fled."

Such was the dreadful confession of Leonard Doane. And now tortured by the idea of his

sister's guilt, yet sometimes yielding to a conviction of her purity; stung with remorse for the death of Walter Brome, and shuddering with a deeper sense of some unutterable crime, perpetrated, as he imagined, in madness or a dream; moved also by dark impulses, as if a fiend were whispering him to meditate violence against the life of Alice, — he had sought this interview with the wizard, who, on certain conditions, had no power to withhold his aid in unravelling the mystery. The tale drew near its close.

The moon was bright on high; the blue firmament appeared to glow with an inherent brightness; the greater stars were burning in their spheres; the northern lights threw their mysterious glare far over the horizon; the few small clouds aloft were burdened with radiance; but the sky, with all its variety of light, was scarcely so brilliant as the earth. The rain of the preceding night had frozen as it fell, and, by that simple magic, had wrought wonders. The trees were hung with diamonds and many-colored gems; the houses were overlaid with silver, and the streets paved with slippery brightness; a frigid glory was flung over all familiar things, from the cottage chimney to the steeple of the meeting-house, that gleamed upward to the sky. This living world, where we sit by our

firesides, or go forth to meet beings like ourselves, seemed rather the creation of wizard power, with so much of resemblance to known objects that a man might shudder at the ghostly shape of his old beloved dwelling, and the shadow of a ghostly tree before his door. One looked to behold inhabitants suited to such a town, glittering in icy garments, with motionless features, cold, sparkling eyes, and just sensation enough in their frozen hearts to shiver at each other's presence.

By this fantastic piece of description, and more in the same style, I intended to throw a ghostly glimmer round the reader, so that his imagination might view the town through a medium that should take off its every-day aspect, and make it a proper theatre for so wild a scene as the final one. Amid this unearthly show, the wretched brother and sister were represented as setting forth, at midnight, through the gleaming streets, and directing their steps to a graveyard, where all the dead had been laid, from the first corpse in that ancient town to the murdered man who was buried three days before. As they went, they seemed to see the wizard gliding by their sides, or walking dimly on the path before them. But here I paused, and gazed into the faces of my two fair auditors, to judge

whether, even on the hill where so many had been brought to death by wilder tales than this, I might venture to proceed. Their bright eyes were fixed on me; their lips apart. I took courage, and led the fated pair to a new-made grave, where for a few moments, in the bright and silent midnight, they stood alone. But suddenly there was a multitude of people among the graves.

Each family tomb had given up its inhabitants, who, one by one, through distant years, had been borne to its dark chamber, but now came forth and stood in a pale group together. There was the gray ancestor, the aged mother, and all their descendants, some withered and full of years, like themselves, and others in their prime; there, too, were the children who went prattling to the tomb, and there the maiden who yielded her early beauty to death's embrace, before passion had polluted it. Husbands and wives arose, who had lain many years side by side, and young mothers who had forgotten to kiss their first babes, though pillowed so long on their bosoms. Many had been buried in the habiliments of life, and still wore their ancient garb; some were old defenders of the infant colony, and gleamed forth in their steel caps and bright breastplates, as if starting up at an Indian war cry; other venerable shapes had been pas-

tors of the church, famous among the New England clergy, and now leaned with hands clasped over their gravestones, ready to call the congregation to prayer. There stood the early settlers, those old illustrious ones, the heroes of tradition and fireside legends, the men of history whose features had been so long beneath the sod that few alive could have remembered them. There, too, were faces of former townspeople, dimly recollected from childhood, and others, whom Leonard and Alice had wept in later years, but who now were most terrible of all, by their ghastly smile of recognition. All, in short, were there; the dead of other generations, whose moss-grown names could scarce be read upon their tombstones, and their successors, whose graves were not yet green; all whom black funerals had followed slowly thither now reappeared where the mourners left them. Yet none but souls accursed were there, and fiends counterfeiting the likeness of departed saints.

The countenances of those venerable men, whose very features had been hallowed by lives of piety, were contorted now by intolerable pain or hellish passion, and now by an unearthly and derisive merriment. Had the pastors prayed, all saintlike as they seemed, it had been blasphemy. The chaste matrons, too, and the maidens with untasted lips, who had slept in their virgin graves apart from all other dust, now wore

a look from which the two trembling mortals shrank, as if the unimaginable sin of twenty worlds were collected there. The faces of fond lovers, even of such as had pined into the tomb, because there their treasure was, were bent on one another with glances of hatred and smiles of bitter scorn, passions that are to devils what love is to the blest. At times, the features of those who had passed from a holy life to heaven would vary to and fro, between their assumed aspect and the fiendish lineaments whence they had been transformed. The whole miserable multitude, both sinful souls and false spectres of good men, groaned horribly and gnashed their teeth, as they looked upward to the calm loveliness of the midnight sky, and beheld those homes of bliss where they must never dwell. Such was the apparition, though too shadowy for language to portray; for here would be the moonbeams on the ice, glittering through a warrior's breastplate, and there the letters of a tombstone, on the form that stood before it; and whenever a breeze went by, it swept the old men's hoary heads, the women's fearful beauty, and all the unreal throng, into one indistinguishable cloud together.

I dare not give the remainder of the scene, except in a very brief epitome. This company

of devils and condemned souls had come on a holiday, to revel in the discovery of a complicated crime ; as foul a one as ever was imagined in their dreadful abode. In the course of the tale, the reader had been permitted to discover that all the incidents were results of the machinations of the wizard, who had cunningly devised that Walter Brome should tempt his unknown sister to guilt and shame, and himself perish by the hand of his twin brother. I described the glee of the fiends at this hideous conception, and their eagerness to know if it were consummated. The story concluded with the Appeal of Alice to the spectre of Walter Brome ; his reply, absolving her from every stain ; and the trembling awe with which ghost and devil fled, as from the sinless presence of an angel.

The sun had gone down. While I held my page of wonders in the fading light, and read how Alice and her brother were left alone among the graves, my voice mingled with the sigh of a summer wind, which passed over the hilltop, with the broad and hollow sound as of the flight of unseen spirits. Not a word was spoken till I added that the wizard's grave was close beside us, and that the wood-wax had sprouted originally from his unhallowed bones. The ladies started ; perhaps their cheeks might have grown pale had not the crimson west been blushing on them ; but after a moment they began to laugh,

while the breeze took a livelier motion, as if responsive to their mirth. I kept an awful solemnity of visage, being, indeed, a little piqued that a narrative which had good authority in our ancient superstitions, and would have brought even a church deacon to Gallows Hill, in old witch times, should now be considered too grotesque and extravagant for timid maids to tremble at. Though it was past supper time, I detained them a while longer on the hill, and made a trial whether truth were more powerful than fiction.

We looked again towards the town, no longer arrayed in that icy splendor of earth, tree, and edifice, beneath the glow of a wintry midnight, which shining afar through the gloom of a century had made it appear the very home of visions in visionary streets. An indistinctness had begun to creep over the mass of buildings and blend them with the intermingled treetops, except where the roof of a statelier mansion, and the steeples and brick towers of churches, caught the brightness of some cloud that yet floated in the sunshine. Twilight over the landscape was congenial to the obscurity of time. With such eloquence as my share of feeling and fancy could supply, I called back hoar antiquity, and bade my companions imagine an ancient multitude of people, congregated on the hillside, spreading far below, clustering on the steep old roofs, and climbing the adjacent heights, wherever a

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glimpse of this spot might be obtained. I strove to realize and faintly communicate the deep, unutterable loathing and horror, the indignation, the affrighted wonder, that wrinkled on every brow, and filled the universal heart. See! the whole crowd turns pale and shrinks within itself, as the virtuous emerge from yonder street. Keeping pace with that devoted company, I described them one by one; here tottered a woman in her dotage, knowing neither the crime imputed her, nor its punishment; there another, distracted by the universal madness, till feverish dreams were remembered as realities, and she almost believed her guilt. One, a proud man once, was so broken down by the intolerable hatred heaped upon him, that he seemed to hasten his steps, eager to hide himself in the grave hastily dug at the foot of the gallows. As they went slowly on, a mother looked behind, and beheld her peaceful dwelling; she cast her eyes elsewhere, and groaned inwardly yet with bitterest anguish, for there was her little son among the accusers. I watched the face of an ordained pastor, who walked onward to the same death; his lips moved in prayer; no narrow petition for himself alone, but embracing all his fellow sufferers and the frenzied multitude; he looked to Heaven and trod lightly up the hill.

Behind their victims came the afflicted, a guilty and miserable band; villains who had thus

avenged themselves on their enemies, and viler wretches, whose cowardice had destroyed their friends; lunatics, whose ravings had chimed in with the madness of the land; and children, who had played a game that the imps of darkness might have envied them, since it disgraced an age, and dipped a people's hands in blood. In the rear of the procession rode a figure on horseback, so darkly conspicuous, so sternly triumphant, that my hearers mistook him for the visible presence of the fiend himself; but it was only his good friend, Cotton Mather, proud of his well-won dignity, as the representative of all the hateful features of his time; the one bloodthirsty man, in whom were concentrated those vices of spirit and errors of opinion that sufficed to madden the whole surrounding multitude. And thus I marshalled them onward, the innocent who were to die, and the guilty who were to grow old in long remorse — tracing their every step, by rock, and shrub, and broken track, till their shadowy visages had circled round the hill-top, where we stood. I plunged into my imagination for a blacker horror, and a deeper woe, and pictured the scaffold —

But here my companions seized an arm on each side; their nerves were trembling; and, sweeter victory still, I had reached the seldom-trodden places of their hearts, and found the well-spring of their tears. And now the past had done all

it could. We slowly descended, watching the lights as they twinkled gradually through the town, and listening to the distant mirth of boys at play, and to the voice of a young girl warbling somewhere in the dusk, a pleasant sound to wanderers from old witch-times. Yet, ere we left the hill, we could not but regret that there is nothing on its barren summit, no relic of old, nor lettered stone of later days, to assist the imagination in appealing to the heart. We build the memorial column on the height which our fathers made sacred with their blood, poured out in a holy cause. And here, in dark, funereal stone, should rise another monument, sadly commemorative of the errors of an earlier race, and not to be cast down, while the human heart has one infirmity that may result in crime.

THE GHOST OF DOCTOR HARRIS

I AM afraid this ghost story will bear a very faded aspect when transferred to paper. Whatever effect it had on you, or whatever charm it retains in your memory, is perhaps to be attributed to the favorable circumstances under which it was originally told.

We were sitting, I remember, late in the evening, in your drawing-room, where the lights of the chandelier were so muffled as to produce a delicious obscurity through which the fire diffused a dim red glow. In this rich twilight the feelings of the party had been properly attuned by some tales of English superstition, and the lady of Smithills Hall had just been describing that Bloody Footstep which marks the threshold of her old mansion, when your Yankee guest (zealous for the honor of his country, and desirous of proving that his dead compatriots have the same ghostly privileges as other dead people, if they think it worth while to use them) began a story of something wonderful that long ago happened to himself. Possibly in the verbal narrative he may have assumed a little more license than would be allowable in a written record. For the sake of the artistic

effect, he may then have thrown in, here and there, a few slight circumstances which he will not think it proper to retain in what he now puts forth as the sober statement of a veritable fact.

A good many years ago (it must be as many as fifteen, perhaps more, and while I was still a bachelor) I resided at Boston, in the United States. In that city there is a large and long-established library, styled the Athenæum, connected with which is a reading-room, well supplied with foreign and American periodicals and newspapers. A splendid edifice has since been erected by the proprietors of the institution; but, at the period I speak of, it was contained within a large, old mansion, formerly the town residence of an eminent citizen of Boston. The reading-room (a spacious hall, with the group of the Laocoon at one end, and the Belvidere Apollo at the other) was frequented by not a few elderly merchants, retired from business, by clergymen and lawyers, and by such literary men as we had amongst us. These good people were mostly old, leisurely, and somnolent, and used to nod and doze for hours together, with the newspapers before them — ever and anon rccovering themselves so far as to read a word or two of the politics of the day — sitting, as it were, on the boundary of the Land of Dreams, and having little to do with this world, except

through the newspapers which they so tenaciously grasped.

One of these worthies, whom I occasionally saw there, was the Reverend Doctor Harris, a Unitarian clergyman of considerable repute and eminence. He was very far advanced in life, not less than eighty years old, and probably more; and he resided, I think, at Dorchester, a suburban village in the immediate vicinity of Boston. I had never been personally acquainted with this good old clergyman, but had heard of him all my life as a noteworthy man; so that when he was first pointed out to me I looked at him with a certain specialty of attention, and always subsequently eyed him with a degree of interest whenever I happened to see him at the Athenæum or elsewhere. He was a small, withered, infirm, but brisk old gentleman, with snow-white hair, a somewhat stooping figure, but yet a remarkable alacrity of movement. I remember it was in the street that I first noticed him. The Doctor was plodding along with a staff, but turned smartly about on being addressed by the gentleman who was with me, and responded with a good deal of vivacity.

"Who is he?" I inquired, as soon as he had passed. "The Reverend Doctor Harris, of Dorchester," replied my companion; and from that time I often saw him, and never forgot his aspect. His especial haunt was the Athenæum.

There I used to see him daily, and almost always with a newspaper — the Boston Post, which was the leading journal of the Democratic party in the Northern States. As old Doctor Harris had been a noted Democrat during his more active life, it was a very natural thing that he should still like to read the Boston Post. There his reverend figure was accustomed to sit day after day, in the self-same chair by the fireside; and, by degrees, seeing him there so constantly, I began to look towards him as I entered the reading-room, and felt that a kind of acquaintance, at least on my part, was established. Not that I had any reason (as long as this venerable person remained in the body) to suppose that he ever noticed me; but by some subtle connection, this small, white-haired, infirm, yet vivacious figure of an old clergyman became associated with my idea and recollection of the place. One day especially (about noon, as was generally his hour) I am perfectly certain that I had seen this figure of old Doctor Harris, and taken my customary note of him, although I remember nothing in his appearance at all different from what I had seen on many previous occasions.

But, that very evening, a friend said to me, "Did you hear that old Doctor Harris is dead?" "No," said I very quietly, "and it cannot be true; for I saw him at the Athenæum to-day."

"You must be mistaken," rejoined my friend. "He is certainly dead!" and confirmed the fact with such special circumstances that I could no longer doubt it. My friend has often since assured me that I seemed much startled at the intelligence; but, as well as I can recollect, I believe that I was very little disturbed, if at all, but set down the apparition as a mistake of my own, or, perhaps, the interposition of a familiar idea into the place and amid the circumstances with which I had been accustomed to associate it.

The next day, as I ascended the steps of the Athenæum, I remember thinking within myself, "Well, I never shall see old Doctor Harris again!" With this thought in my mind, as I opened the door of the reading-room, I glanced towards the spot and chair where Doctor Harris usually sat, and there, to my astonishment, sat the gray, infirm figure of the deceased Doctor, reading the newspaper as was his wont! His own death must have been recorded, that very morning, in that very newspaper! I have no recollection of being greatly discomposed at the moment, nor indeed that I felt any extraordinary emotion whatever. Probably, if ghosts were in the habit of coming among us, they would coincide with the ordinary train of affairs, and melt into them so familiarly that we should not be shocked at their presence. At all events, so it was in this instance. I looked through the

newspapers as usual, and turned over the periodicals, taking about as much interest in their contents as at other times. Once or twice, no doubt, I may have lifted my eyes from the page to look again at the venerable Doctor, who ought then to have been lying in his coffin dressed out for the grave, but who felt such interest in the Boston Post as to come back from the other world to read it the morning after his death. One might have supposed that he would have cared more about the novelties of the sphere to which he had just been introduced than about the politics he had left behind him!

The apparition took no notice of me, nor behaved otherwise in any respect than on any previous day. Nobody but myself seemed to notice him; and yet the old gentlemen round about the fire, beside his chair, were his lifelong acquaintances, who were perhaps thinking of his death, and who in a day or two would deem it a proper courtesy to attend his funeral.

I have forgotten how the ghost of Doctor Harris took its departure from the Athenæum on this occasion, or, in fact, whether the ghost or I went first. This equanimity, and almost indifference, on my part — the careless way in which I glanced at so singular a mystery and left it aside — is what now surprises me as much as anything else in the affair.

From that time, for a long while thereafter

— for weeks at least, and I know not but for months — I used to see the figure of Doctor Harris quite as frequently as before his death. It grew to be so common that at length I regarded the venerable defunct no more than any other of the old fogies who basked before the fire and dozed over the newspapers.

It was but a ghost — nothing but thin air — not tangible nor appreciable, nor demanding any attention from a man of flesh and blood! I cannot recollect any cold shudderings, any awe, any repugnance, any emotion whatever, such as would be suitable and decorous on beholding a visitant from the spiritual world. It is very strange, but such is the truth. It appears excessively odd to me now that I did not adopt such means as I readily might to ascertain whether the appearance had solid substance, or was merely gaseous and vapory. I might have brushed against him, have jostled his chair, or have trodden accidentally on his poor old toes. I might have snatched the Boston Post — unless that were an apparition too — out of his shadowy hands. I might have tested him in a hundred ways; but I did nothing of the kind.

Perhaps I was loath to destroy the illusion, and to rob myself of so good a ghost story, which might probably have been explained in some very commonplace way. Perhaps, after all, I had a secret dread of the old phenomenon,

and therefore kept within my limits, with an instinctive caution which I mistook for indifference. Be this as it may, here is the fact. I saw the figure, day after day, for a considerable space of time, and took no pains to ascertain whether it was a ghost or no. I never, to my knowledge, saw him come into the reading-room or depart from it. There sat Doctor Harris in his customary chair, and I can say little else about him.

After a certain period — I really know not how long — I began to notice, or to fancy, a peculiar regard in the old gentleman's aspect towards myself. I sometimes found him gazing at me, and, unless I deceived myself, there was a sort of expectancy in his face. His spectacles, I think, were shoved up, so that his bleared eyes might meet my own. Had he been a living man I should have flattered myself that good Doctor Harris was, for some reason or other, interested in me and desirous of a personal acquaintance. Being a ghost, and amenable to ghostly laws, it was natural to conclude that he was waiting to be spoken to before delivering whatever message he wished to impart. But, if so, the ghost had shown the bad judgment common among the spiritual brotherhood, both as regarded the place of interview and the person whom he had selected as the recipient of his communications. In the reading-room of the

Athenæum conversation is strictly forbidden, and I could not have addressed the apparition without drawing the instant notice and indignant frowns of the slumbrous old gentlemen around me. I myself, too, at that time, was as shy as any ghost, and followed the ghosts' rule never to speak first. And what an absurd figure should I have made, solemnly and awfully addressing what must have appeared, in the eyes of all the rest of the company, an empty chair! Besides, I had never been introduced to Doctor Harris, dead or alive, and I am not aware that social regulations are to be abrogated by the accidental fact of one of the parties having crossed the imperceptible line which separates the other party from the spiritual world. If ghosts throw off all conventionalism among themselves, it does not therefore follow that it can safely be dispensed with by those who are still hampered with flesh and blood.

For such reasons as these — and reflecting, moreover, that the deceased Doctor might burden me with some disagreeable task, with which I had no business nor wish to be concerned — I stubbornly resolved to have nothing to say to him. To this determination I adhered; and not a syllable ever passed between the ghost of Doctor Harris and myself.

To the best of my recollection, I never observed the old gentleman either enter the read-

ing-room or depart from it, or move from his chair, or lay down the newspaper, or exchange a look with any person in the company, unless it were myself. He was not by any means invariably in his place. In the evening, for instance, though often at the reading-room myself, I never saw him. It was at the brightest noontide that I used to behold him, sitting within the most comfortable focus of the glowing fire, as real and lifelike an object (except that he was so very old, and of an ashen complexion) as any other in the room. After a long while of this strange intercourse, if such it can be called, I remember — once, at least, and I know not but oftener — a sad, wistful, disappointed gaze, which the ghost fixed upon me from beneath his spectacles ; a melancholy look of helplessness, which, if my heart had not been as hard as a paving-stone, I could hardly have withstood. But I did withstand it ; and I think I saw him no more after this last appealing look, which still dwells in my memory as perfectly as while my own eyes were encountering the dim and bleared eyes of the ghost. And whenever I recall this strange passage of my life, I see the small, old, withered figure of Doctor Harris, sitting in his accustomed chair, the Boston Post in his hand, his spectacles shoved upwards — and gazing at me as I close the door of the reading-room, with that wistful, appealing, hope-

less, helpless look. It is too late now; his grave has been grass-grown this many and many a year; and I hope he has found rest in it without any aid from me.

I have only to add that it was not until long after I had ceased to encounter the ghost that I became aware how very odd and strange the whole affair had been; and even now I am made sensible of its strangeness chiefly by the wonder and incredulity of those to whom I tell the story.

LIVERPOOL, *August* 17, 1856.

APPENDIX

THE YOUNG PROVINCIAL

"Now, father, tell us all about the old gun," were the words of one of a number of children, who were seated around the hearth of a New England cottage. The old man sat in an arm-chair at one side of the fireplace, and his wife was installed in one of smaller dimensions on the other. The boys, that they might not disturb the old man's meditations, seemed to keep as much silence as was possible for individuals of their age; the fire burned high, with a sound like that of a trumpet, and its blaze occasionally shone on an old rifle which was suspended horizontally above the mantel.

"Willingly, my boys," said the old man, apparently animated by his returning recollections. "It may help to give you an idea of old times, when boys could not stay in their quiet homes like you, but were forced, or rather glad, to do what little they could for their country. My father lived in Tewksbury, a small town in Middlesex county. We were not generally much interested in the news of the day, but the spirit of resistance had then spread to every cottage in the country. The younger men of our village, following the example of others, had formed themselves into military bands, who were obliged by

the terms of their association to be ready to march at a moment's warning, and were, therefore, called Minute Men. Perhaps if you accent the last syllable of that word minute, it would better describe a considerable portion of our number, of whom I was one. I armed myself with that rifle which you see over the mantel, though it was a weary labor to me to bear it on a march, and this, with a leathern bag for bullets, and a powder-horn, completed my equipment. We relied more upon the justice of our cause, not to mention our skill in sharp-shooting, than upon military discipline, and thence derived courage which was not a little needed; for the name of Roger was a very formidable one to every American ear.

"Having completed our preparations, such as they were, we waited for an opportunity, which the British were expected soon to afford us. It was understood that their purpose was to possess themselves of certain military stores at Concord, and a secret arrangement was made with the friends of liberty in Boston, that when they marched out for that purpose, lights should be displayed in certain spires, to alarm the country. One night in April, after a day of unusually hard labor, we were suddenly startled with a heavy sound which shook all the windows of the house. Another followed it, and we said in deep and half breathless tones to each other, 'It is the signal gun!' I must confess that my heart beat hard at the sound, and my cheek was cold with dismay; but my father, who was lame with a wound received in the old French War, encouraged us by his animation. 'Now,' said he, 'the time is come. Go, my boys, and do your

best.' We had no time for sad reflections, so we ran hastily to the meeting-house, where the rest of our number were already collected by the light of lanterns. With your ideas of military show, you might, in a calmer moment, have smiled at our display. The younger men were gathered in groups round certain veterans who rejoiced in that opportunity of fighting their battles over again; but the arrival of the colonel broke up their conference. He came, not in state with his staff around him, but with that sign of authority in his hand. He was a man whose equanimity nothing ever disturbed, and I am free to confess that I heartily envied him, when I heard his quiet tones calling to his men to mind their business; and when they had sufficiently arranged their ranks, saying, 'Come, we'd as good's go along.' Along he went, as quietly as he had followed his plough that day, but there were hearts among his followers that were sorely oppressed by the excitement of the scene.

"We moved in darkness and silence on the road to Lexington. As we came near the town, we thought we heard the sound of some unusual motion, and, as the day began to dawn, were on the watch to discover the cause, when suddenly, as we turned the base of a hill, the martial music burst upon the ear, and the bright colors and the long red files of the British army came full in view. As if by one consent we all stood still for a time; and I declare to you, that helpless as we were in comparison to such a force, and young as I was for such encounters, the moment I saw what the danger was, I felt at once relieved, and, nothing

doubting that an engagement must take place, I longed for it to begin.

"In a few moments we heard the sound of irregular firing, and saw our countrymen dispersing in every direction. Then our senior officer gave orders — not after a military sort, but still the best that could be given on such an occasion — for each man to go into the fields and fight 'upon his own hook.' This was done at once, and with surprising execution. A close fire was poured in on the regulars from all quarters, though not an American was to be seen. They fired passionately and at random, but every moment they saw their best men falling, and found themselves obliged to retreat without revenge. Closely did we follow them throughout that day. Unused as we were to blood, we felt a triumph when each one of our enemies fell. I received two balls in my clothes, and one passed through my hat, but so engaged was I in firing, that I hardly noticed them at the time.

"When my powder was gone, I went out on the track of the retreating army, with a high heart and burning cheek, I assure you. The first of the fallen that I saw before me was a young officer, not older than myself, who had received a wound in the breast, and was lying by the wayside. There was a calm repose in the expression of his features, which I have often seen in those who died of gunshot wounds; his lips were gently parted, and he seemed like one neither dead nor sleeping, but profoundly wrapped in meditations on distant scenes and friends. I went up to him with the same proud feeling which I had maintained throughout the battle; but when I saw him lying there

in his beauty, and thought of all the hopes that were crushed by that blow, of those who were dreaming of him as one free from danger, and waiting the happy moment that was to restore him to their arms; and, more than all, when I thought that I might have been the cause of all this destruction, my heart relented within me, and I confess to you that I sat down by that poor youth and wept like a child. I left the spot with the heavy steps of one who feels the weight of blood upon his head, and returned to my father's house resolved to expiate my crime. The image of that youth, pale and bleeding, was before my eyes by day, and at my bedside by night, for weeks after, and in every wind I thought I heard the voice of the avenger of blood."

"And did you fight no more, father?"

"O yes, my boy. As soon as Boston was invested, we heard that our services were called for, and nothing more was wanted to fill the ranks of the army. I arrived at the camp the evening before the battle of Bunker Hill. Though weary with the march of the day, I went to the hill upon which our men were throwing up the breastwork in silence, and happened to reach the spot just as the morning was breaking in the sky. It was clear and calm; the sky was like pearl, the mist rolled lightly from the still water, and the large vessels of the enemy lay quiet as the islands. Never shall I forget the earthquake-voice with which that silence was broken. A smoke like that of a conflagration burst from the sides of the ships, and the first thunders of the revolutionary storm rolled over our heads. The bells of the city spread the alarm,

the lights flashed in a thousand windows, the drums and trumpets mustered their several bands, and the sounds, in their confusion, seemed like an articulate voice foretelling the strife of that day.

"We took our places mechanically, side by side, behind the breastwork, and waited for the struggle to begin. We waited long and in silence. There was no noise but of the men at the breastwork strengthening their rude fortifications. We saw the boats put off from the city, and land the forces on the shore beneath our station. Still there was silence, except when the tall figure of our commander moved along our line, directing us not to fire until the word was given. For my part, as I saw those gallant forces march up the hill in well ordered ranks, with the easy confidence of those who had been used to victory, I was motionless with astonishment and delight. I thought only on their danger, and the steady courage with which they advanced to meet it, the older officers moving with mechanical indifference, the younger with impatient daring. Then a fire blazed along their ranks, but the shot struck in the redoubt or passed harmlessly over our heads. Not a solitary musket answered, and if you had seen the redoubt, you would have said that some mighty charm had turned all its inmates to stone. But when they stood so near us that every shot would tell, a single gun from the right was the signal for us to begin, and we poured upon them a fire, under which a single glance, before the smoke covered all, showed us their columns reeling like some mighty wall which the elements are striving to overthrow. As the vapor passed away, their line appeared as if a scythe of destruction had cut

it down, for one long line of dead and dying marked the spot where their ranks had stood. Again they returned to the charge; again they were cut down; and then the heavy masses of smoke from the burning town added magnificence to the scene. By this time my powder-horn was empty, and most of those around me had but a single charge remaining. It was evident that our post must be abandoned, but I resolved to resist them once again. They came upon us with double fury. An officer happened to be near me; raising my musket, and putting all my strength into the blow, I laid him dead at my feet. But, meantime, the British line passed me in pursuit of the flying Americans, and thus cut off my retreat; one of their soldiers fired, and the ball entered my side. I fell, and was beaten with muskets on the head until they left me for dead upon the field. When I recovered, the soldiers were employed in burying their dead. An officer inquired if I could walk; but finding me unable, he directed his men to drag me by the feet to their boats, where I was thrown in, fainting with agony, and carried with the rest of the prisoners to Boston. One of my comrades, who saw me fallen, returned with the news to my parents. They heard nothing more concerning me, but had no doubt that I was slain. They mourned for me as lost, and a rude stone was erected near the graves of my family, in the burying-ground, to record the fate of the one who was not permitted to sleep with his fathers. I doubt not that the mourning was sincere, nor do I doubt that there was in all their sorrow a feeling of exultation, that one of their number was counted worthy to suffer death in the service of his country.

The old schoolmaster, who was a learned man, said it was like the monument to the slain at Marathon, a great field of ancient times, and often pointed it out to his scholars from his school window, to encourage that spirit of freedom which was the passion of that day.

"I was carried to the hospital in Boston, and never shall I forget the scene presented in that abode of woe. The rooms were small and crowded; the regular and provincial were thrown in together, to be visited, that is, looked upon, if perchance they could catch his eye, once a day, by an indifferent physician, who neither understood nor cared for his duty. It was dire and dreadful to hear the curses poured out by some dying wretch upon the rebels who had given him his death wound; but my heart sank still more at hearing the last words of some of my countrymen, who entreated the surviving to tell their friends that in death they remembered them, and gave up their lives calmly and religiously, as brave men should. One youth of my age do I especially remember; his bed was next to mine. One night his gasping informed me that his death was drawing nigh. I rose upon my elbow and looked upon him, as a pale lamp shone upon his features. There was a tear in his eye, and his thoughts were far away, evidently returning to that home which never was to behold him again. Long time he lay thus, and I remained gazing on him, expecting myself soon to pass through the same change. At last the expression of his countenance altered; he raised his hands and clasped them as if in supplication, his eyes were turned upwards, and in that prayer, when sleep had

happily sealed the eyes of the blasphemers around him, he gave up his soul unto God.

"When the British were obliged to retire from Boston, I was taken to Halifax, with the rest of the prisoners, in the fleet. I was first placed in a prison-ship, but soon removed to a prison in the town. The confinement grew intolerable, as my limbs recovered strength, and the prison door was hardly closed before I resolved, with my companions, that we would not rest till we had made one great endeavor. Every day we were insulted by the wretches employed to guard us; our food was hardly sufficient to sustain us; we were not permitted to know anything of the success of our countrymen, and as often as any favor was requested, it was denied with bitter scorn. Our apartment, in which six were confined, resembled a dungeon; but this, while it added to the gloom of our condition, aided our attempts at escape. I was fortunate enough to find an old bayonet upon the floor, with which I loosened the masonry of the prison wall. Long and wearily did we labor, relieving each other at the task, and thus keeping constantly employed day and night, except when the grating of rusty hinges informed us that the turnkey was coming near our room. We had hung up our clothing on the wall where we labored as soon as we entered the jail, so that it was not suspected to be a screen for our labors. In the course of four long weeks we succeeded in penetrating through the wall, and never did my heart bound with such delight, as when I saw the first gleam of a star through the opening.

"We waited for a night suitable to our purpose, and

it seemed as if the elements had conspired against us; for seven days passed, and each night it was as clear and calm as possible. At last the night set in dark and stormy. The wind, as it howled from the ocean, and sent the rain rattling against our little window, was music to our ears. We heard the toll of midnight from the bells of the town, and then began our operations. We took the stones of the wall and placed them within the dungeon, removing them silently and one by one. When the passage was opened, we saw that it was not very high above the ground. We doubted not that the sentry would conceal himself in his box from the storm, but lest he should discover us, each armed himself with a stone. He was sheltered, as we supposed, but hearing the sound we made in letting ourselves down from the breach, he came toward us. Before he could give his challenge we threw our stones at the unfortunate man, and heard him sink heavily to the earth, his musket ringing as he fell.

"Four of our number were strong, but one, with myself, was infirm from the effect of wounds. They, therefore, at our request, left us behind, though with much apparent reluctance. It was an evil hour for them when they did so, for they were afterwards retaken, and committed to prison again, where ill treatment and depression put an end to their lives before the close of the war. I went with my companion into a swamp about a mile from the town, and we had hardly secured our retreat, and laid ourselves down to rest, when the roar of a gun came floating upon the wind, a signal that our retreat was discovered. It was followed by the martial shout of the bugle; but, near

as it was, we could go no farther, and could only quietly employ ourselves in gathering boughs of pine to form a kind of couch and covering. Thus we lay sheltered till the day dawned, listening in no pleasing suspense to the sounds of alarm that reached us from the town. In a few hours the sounds grew near us; we could even see our pursuers as they passed by. A small party employed a stratagem to draw us from the swamp, in which they thought it possible we had taken shelter. Suddenly crying out, 'Here they are,' they fired into the shrubbery; but though the balls fell all around us, we saw their motions, and were not frightened from our hiding place. We rose at night, and went on our way, subsisting upon roots and berries, together with a little miserable bread, which we had saved for this expedition; but we were tortured with hunger, and on passing a barn my companion secured a fowl, which we ate, raw as it was, with delight.

"Thus we travelled for seven days, almost without food, and entirely without shelter; but our strength began to give way. I deliberated with my companion, who was resolute, though still more feeble than I, and we determined to throw ourselves on the mercy of some passing traveller. We had no other possible chance of relief, and though this was hazardous, and almost hopeless, we resolved if we met but one person, we would make ourselves known, and ask his protection. Soon after we had decided on this adventure, we heard the lingering tramp of a horse, and saw a venerable-looking person, who reminded us of one of our New England farmers, going to market with well filled saddle-bags, from which the claws of poultry made their appearance

in the attitude of supplication. He was to all appearance just the man we wanted to see, and our first impressions were not disappointed. I came out from the hedge, and requested him to hear me; but he looked at me with his eyes and mouth wide open, and saying, 'Can't stop,' endeavored, with much clamor, to urge his beast into a quicker step. But the steed was my friend on this occasion, and absolutely refused to hasten his movements without some better reason than he saw at the time. I took advantage of his delay to state my condition to the old man, whose countenance changed at once on hearing my story. 'Conscience!' said he, 'I thought ye no better than a picaroon; but ye look 'most starved.' So saying, he got off his horse, and, opening his saddle-bags, he gave me the bread and cheese which he had provided for his own journey. This I shared with my companion, who came forward and joined me. 'I was going to ask you to ride double,' said the farmer, 'but the creature can't carry three, though ye are both of ye rather meagre. However, wait here till I come back at night, then I will lend a hand to help you. I don't know as it's quite right, but I took a notion for the Americans myself, when I heard you were angry about the price of tea. It's dear enough here, that's certain. But whether or no, I can't see how I should help King George by carrying you back to Halifax, to be hanged, maybe, though I would do anything for the old gentleman in reason.' With many cautions and encouragements he left us.

"We concealed ourselves through the day, and many suspicions came over us, that our friend might

be induced by the reward to give us up to our pursuers. But we did him injustice. At night he came back, and seemed glad to see us when we made our appearance. 'I might have come back before,' said he, 'but I thought we could work better in the dark.' He then dismounted, and without delay directed us to mount the horse, while he would walk by its side. For a long time we refused to suffer him, aged as he was, to encounter such fatigue, but we were really worn out, and at last consented. We went on all that night, the old man keeping up our spirits by his conversation. It was daybreak before he showed any intention of making a permanent halt; but as the morning grew red in the sky, he urged us forward till we stopped under the windows of a solitary farmhouse, with its large buildings round it, not neat as they are seen in New England, but still indicating thrift and industry in its possessor. 'Thank Heaven, here we are,' said the farmer, 'for I do not know how it is, I am not the man for a walk I once was;' and truly the weight of eighty years might have exempted him from such labors. He went to what appeared to be a bedroom window, where he knocked with some caution. Forthwith a nightcapped head made its appearance, and at once declared its native land by the exclamation, 'Law for me! what brings you home at this time o' night!' But the question was only answered by a request that the individual, who was no less than the old man's helpmate, would rise and open the door. She rose with cheerful alacrity, and immediately began to make preparations for the morning's meal, without troubling herself much about the

character of her husband's guests; though it should not be forgotten, that he condescended to make some little explanations. When the breakfast was over, which, however, was a work of time, we were invited to spend all that day in rest after our long and painful labor.

"In the evening we met again in the huge kitchen, which was the gathering place of the family, who were amused with some feigned account of our character, and the object of our visit. When the miscellaneous collection had retired, leaving us with the old man and his wife, we gave him a full account of our adventures, finding from his unconcern as to politics that we were in a place of security. He told us there was much confusion in the town on account of our escape, and that a reward was offered for our detection, while at the same time detachments of soldiers were sent in pursuit. He himself was strictly examined, and he said that he did not feel quite easy in his mind, when he thought of the lies of all sorts and sizes which he had felt obliged to tell. 'However,' said he, 'I did not do evil that good might come. I did the good first and then the evil followed, which was no lookout of mine.'

"We proposed to leave him that night, but he would by no means consent to this, and insisted on our remaining with him for some time, as he said, 'to pick up our crumbs.' On the third night we took leave of our Samaritan with the deepest emotion of gratitude for his kindness. I always looked on the bright side of human nature; but I never received an impression in its favor so decided and reviving as from the con-

duct of this humble man. I never saw nor heard of him again.

"Our friend had given us directions to a place where we could take passage for Falmouth, now Portland. We succeeded in reaching it without difficulty, and, though we had no money, his recommendation gained us a place in the vessel. I felt relieved when once more upon the waters, and standing gallantly out to sea. With what different feelings had I traversed the same ocean-roads before! Then my heart died within me, as I stood on the battlements of the floating castle that bore me through the waves; every moment increased the distance that separated me from my home and country, which grew dearer to me in the hour of its own distress and mine; now, as our little whaleboat bounded over the waves, I felt bold, joyous, and triumphant. I thought then that there were moments in a life of changes, which atone for the heaviness of many of its hours. I have since learned that the only real happiness is that which I then unconsciously felt, arising from the reflection that I had done my duty.

"From Falmouth we went home on foot. Before I reached my native village, my companion left me. His society had become endeared to me by our partnership in misfortune, and I parted from him with sorrow. He has ceased from the number of the living long ago, but I hope to meet him again. I entered my native place on a clear summer afternoon; the air was calm, the sky was clear, and there was stillness like that of the Sabbath through the whole extent of the place. I remembered hearing the distant bell, and

knew that they were assembled for the lecture which preceded the Communion service, according to the custom of our fathers. I went to my father's door, and entered it softly. My mother was sitting in her usual place by the fireside, though there were green boughs instead of fagots in the chimney before her. When she saw me, she gave a wild look, grew deadly pale, and making an ineffectual effort to speak to me, fainted away. With much difficulty I restored her, but it was long before I could make her understand that the supposed apparition was in truth her son whom she had so long mourned for as dead. My little brother had also caught a glimpse of me, and with that superstition which was in that day so much more common than it is in this, he was sadly alarmed. In his fright he ran to the meeting-house to give the alarm ; when he reached that place, the service had ended, and the congregation were just coming from its doors. Breathless with fear, he gave them his tidings, losing even his dread, in that moment, for the venerable minister and the snowy wigs of the deacons. Having told them what he had seen, they turned, with the whole assembly after them, towards my father's house; and such was their impatience to arrive at the spot, that minister, deacons, old men and matrons, young men and maidens, quickened their steps to a run.

" Never was there such a confusion in our village. The young were eloquent in their amazement, and the old put on their spectacles to see the strange being who had thus returned as from the dead. I told my story over and over again. As often as I concluded it, new detachments arrived, who insisted on hearing all

the particulars in their turn. The house was crowded with visitors till far into the night, when the minister dismissed them, by calling on my father and mother to join him in an offering of praise, 'for this son which was dead and is alive again, which was lost and is found.'"

THE HAUNTED QUACK

A TALE OF A CANAL BOAT

In the summer of 18—, I made an excursion to Niagara. At Schenectady, finding the roads nearly impassable, I took passage in a canal boat for Utica. The weather was dull and lowering. There were but few passengers on board; and of those few, none were sufficiently inviting in appearance to induce me to make any overtures to a travelling acquaintance. A stupid answer, or a surly monosyllable, were all that I got in return for the few simple questions I hazarded. An occasional drizzling rain, and the wet and slippery condition of the tow-path, along which the lazy beasts that dragged the vessel travelled, rendered it impossible to vary the monotony of the scene by walking. I had neglected to provide myself with books, and as we crept along at the dull rate of four miles per hour, I soon felt the foul fiend *Ennui* coming upon me with all her horrors.

"Time and the hour," however, "runs through the roughest day," and night at length approached. By degrees the passengers, seemingly tired of each other's company, began to creep slowly away to their berths; most of them fortifying themselves with a potation, before resigning themselves to the embrace of Morpheus. One called for a glass of hot whiskey punch, because he felt cold; another took some brandy

toddy to prevent his taking cold; some took mint juleps; some gin-slings, and some rum and water. One took his dram because he felt sick; another to make him sleep well; and a third because he had nothing else to do. The last who retired from the cabin, was an old gentleman who had been deeply engaged in a well-thumbed volume all day, and whose mental abstraction I had more than once envied. He now laid down his book, and, pulling out a red night-cap, called for a pint of beer, to take the vapors out of his head.

As soon as he had left the cabin, I took up the volume, and found it to be Glanville's marvellous book, entitled the History of Witches, or the Wonders of the Invisible World Displayed. I began to peruse it, and soon got so deeply interested in some of his wonderful narrations, that the hours slipped unconsciously away, and midnight found me poring half asleep over the pages. From this dreamy state I was suddenly aroused by a muttering, as of a suppressed voice, broken by groans and sounds of distress. Upon looking round, I saw that they proceeded from the figure of a man enveloped in a cloak who was lying asleep upon one of the benches of the cabin whom I had not previously noticed. I recognized him to be a young man, with whose singular appearance and behavior during the day, I had been struck. He was tall and thin in person, rather shabbily dressed, with long, lank, black hair, and large gray eyes, which gave a visionary character to one of the most pallid and cadaverous countenances I had ever beheld. Since he had come on board, he had appeared restless and unquiet, keeping

away from the table at meal times, and seeming averse from entering into conversation with the passengers. Once or twice, on catching my eye, he had slunk away as if, conscience-smitten by the remembrance of some crime, he dreaded to meet the gaze of a fellow mortal. From this behavior I suspected that he was either a fugitive from justice, or else a little disordered in mind; and had resolved to keep my eye on him and observe what course he should take when we reached Utica.

Supposing that the poor fellow was now under the influence of nightmare, I got up with the intention of giving him a shake to rouse him, when the words, "murder," "poison," and others of extraordinary import, dropping unconnectedly from his lips, induced me to stay my hand. "Go away, go away," exclaimed he, as if conscious of my approach, but mistaking me for another. "Why do you continue to torment me? If I did poison you, I did n't mean to do it, and they can't make that out more than manslaughter. Besides, what 's the use of haunting me now? Ain't I going to give myself up, and tell all? Begone! I say, you bloody old hag, begone!" Here the bands of slumber were broken by the intensity of his feelings, and with a wild expression of countenance and a frame shaking with emotion, he started from the bench, and stood trembling before me.

Though convinced that he was a criminal, I could not help pitying him from the forlorn appearance he now exhibited. As soon as he had collected his wandering ideas, it seemed as if he read in my countenance, the mingled sentiments of pity and abhorrence,

with which I regarded him. Looking anxiously around, and seeing that we were alone, he drew the corner of the bench towards me, and sitting down, with an apparent effort to command his feelings, thus addressed me. His tone of voice was calm and distinct; and his countenance, though deadly pale, was composed.

"I see, Sir, that from what I am conscious of having uttered in my disturbed sleep, you suspect me of some horrid crime. You are right. My conscience convicts me, and an awful nightly visitation, worse than the waking pangs of remorse, compels me to confess it. Yes, I am a murderer. I have been the unhappy cause of blotting out the life of a fellow being from the page of human existence. In these pallid features, you may read enstamped, in the same characters which the first murderer bore upon his brow, Guilt — guilt — guilt!"

Here the poor young man paused, evidently agitated by strong internal emotion. Collecting himself, however, in a few moments, he thus continued.

"Yet still, when you have heard my sad story, I think you will bestow upon me your pity. I feel that there is no peace for me, until I have disburthened my mind. Your countenance promises sympathy. Will you listen to my unhappy narrative?"

My curiosity being strongly excited by this strange exordium, I told him I was ready to hear whatever he had to communicate. Upon this, he proceeded as follows: —

"My name is Hippocrates Jenkins. I was born in Nantucket, but my father emigrated to these parts when I was young. I grew up in one of the most

flourishing villages on the borders of the canal. My father and mother both dying of the lake fever, I was bound apprentice to an eminent operative in the boot and shoe making line, who had lately come from New York. Would that I had remained content with this simple and useful profession. Would that I had stuck to my waxed ends and awl, and never undertaken to cobble up people's bodies. But my legs grew tired of being trussed beneath my haunches; my elbows wearied with their monotonous motion; my eyes became dim with gazing forever upon the dull brick wall which faced our shop window; and my whole heart was sick of my sedentary, and, as I foolishly deemed it, particularly mean occupation. My time was nearly expired, and I had long resolved, should any opportunity offer of getting into any other employment, I would speedily embrace it.

"I had always entertained a predilection for the study of medicine. What had given my mind this bias, I know not. Perhaps it was the perusal of an old volume of Doctor Buchan, over whose pages it was the delight of my youthful fancy to pore. Perhaps it was the oddness of my Christian cognomen, which surely was given me by my parents in a prophetic hour. Be this as it may, the summit of my earthly happiness was to be a doctor. Conceive then my delight and surprise, one Saturday evening, after having carried home a pair of new white-topped boots for Doctor Ephraim Ramshorne, who made the care of bodies his care, in the village, to hear him ask me, how I should like to be a doctor. He then very generously offered to take me as a student. From my

earliest recollections, the person and character of Doctor Ramshorne had been regarded by me with the most profound and awful admiration. Time out of mind the successful practitioner for many miles around, I had looked upon him as the *beau idéal* of a doctor — a very Apollo in the healing art. When I speak of him, however, as the *successful* practitioner, I mean it not to be inferred that death was less busy in his doings, or funerals scarcer during his dynasty; but only that he had, by some means or other, contrived to force all those who had ventured to contest the palm with him, to quit the field. He was large and robust in person, and his ruby visage showed that if he grew fat upon drugs, it was not by swallowing them himself. It was never exactly ascertained from what college the Doctor had received his diploma; nor was he very forward to exhibit his credentials. When hard pressed, however, he would produce a musty old roll of parchment, with a red seal as broad as the palm of his hand, which looked as if it might have been the identical diploma of the great Boerhaave himself, and some cramped manuscript of a dozen pages, in an unknown tongue, said by the Doctor to be his Greek thesis. These documents were enough to satisfy the doubts of the most sceptical. By the simple country people, far and near, the Doctor was regarded, in point of occult knowledge and skill, as a second Faustus. It is true, the village lawyer, a rival in popularity, used to whisper, that the Doctor's Greek thesis was nothing but a bundle of prescriptions for the bots, wind-galls, spavins, and other veterinary complaints, written in high Dutch by a Hessian horse doctor; that the diploma

was all a sham, and that Ephraim was no more a doctor than his jackass. But these assertions were all put down to the score of envy on the part of the lawyer. Be this as it may, on the strength of one or two remarkable cures, which he was said to have performed, and by dint of wheedling some and bullying others, it was certain that Ramshorne had worked himself into very good practice. The Doctor united in his own person, the attributes of apothecary and physician; and as he vended, as well as prescribed his own drugs, it was not his interest to stint his patients in their enormous boluses, or nauseous draughts. His former medical student had been worried into a consumption over the mortar and pestle; in consequence of which he had pitched upon me for his successor.

"By the kindness of a few friends I was fitted out with the necessary requisitions for my metamorphosis. The Doctor required no fee, and, in consideration of certain little services to be rendered him, such as taking care of his horse, cleaning his boots, running errands, and doing little jobs about the house, had promised to board and lodge me, besides giving me my professional education. So with a rusty suit of black, and an old plaid cloak, behold equipped the disciple of Esculapius.

"I cannot describe my elation of mind, when I found myself fairly installed in the Doctor's office. Golden visions floated before my eyes. I fancied my fortune already made, and blessed my happy star, that had fallen under the benign influence of so munificent a patron.

"The Doctor's office, as it was called *par excellence*,

was a little nook of a room, communicating with a larger apartment denominated the shop. The paraphernalia of this latter place had gotten somewhat into disorder since the last student had gone away, and I soon learnt that it was to be my task to arrange the heterogeneous mass of bottles, boxes, and gallipots, that were strewed about in promiscuous confusion. In the office, there was a greater appearance of order. A small regiment of musty looking books, were drawn up in line upon a couple of shelves, where, to judge from the superincumbent strata of dust, they appeared to have peacefully reposed for many years. A rickety wooden clock, which the Doctor had taken in part payment from a peddler, and the vital functions of which, to use his own expression, had long since ceased to act, stood in one corner. A mouldy plaster bust of some unknown worthy, a few bottles of pickled, and one or two dried specimens of morbid anatomy, a small chest of drawers, a table, and a couple of chairs, completed the furniture of this *sanctum*. The single window commanded a view of the churchyard, in which, it was said, many of the Doctor's former patients were quietly slumbering. With a feeling of reverence I ventured to dislodge one of the dusty tomes, and began to try to puzzle out the hard words with which it abounded ; when suddenly, as if he had been conjured back, like the evil one by Cornelius Agrippa's book, the Doctor made his appearance. With a gruff air, he snatched the volume from my hands, and telling me not to meddle with what I could not understand, bade me go and take care of his horse, and make haste back, as he wanted me to spread a pitch plaster, and carry

the same, with a bottle of his patent catholicon, to farmer Van Pelt, who had the rheumatism. On my return, I was ordered by Mrs. Ramshorne to split some wood, and kindle a fire in the parlor, as she expected company; after which Miss Euphemia Ramshorne, a sentimental young lady, who was as crooked in person and crabbed in temper as her own name, despatched me to the village circulating library, in quest of the Mysteries of Udolpho. I soon found out that my place was no sinecure. The greater part of my time was occupied in compounding certain quack medicines, of Ramshorne's own invention, from which he derived great celebrity, and no inconsiderable profit. Besides his patent catholicon, and universal panacea, there was his anti-pertusso-balsamico drops, his patent calorific refrigerating anodyne, and his golden restorative of nature. Into the business of compounding these, and other articles with similar high-sounding titles, I was gradually initiated, and soon aquired so much skill in their manipulation, that my services became indispensable to my master; so much so, that he was obliged to hire a little negro to take care of his horse, and clean his boots. What chiefly reconciled me to the drudgery of the shop, was the seeing how well the Doctor got paid for his villainous compounds. A mixture of a little brick dust, rosin, and treacle, dignified with the title of the anthelminthic amalgam, he sold for half a dollar; and a bottle of vinegar and alum, with a little rose water to give it a flavor, yclept the anti-scrofulous abstergent lotion, brought twice that sum. I longed for the day when I should dispense my own medicines, and in my hours of castle-building, looked

forward to fortunes far beyond those of the renowned Dr. Solomon. Alas! my fond hopes have been blighted in their bud. I have drunk deeply of the nauseous draught of adversity, and been forced to swallow many bitter pills of disappointment. But I find I am beginning to smell of the shop. I must return to my sad tale. The same accident, which not unfrequently before had put a sudden stop to the Doctor's patients' taking any more of his nostrums, at length prevented him from reaping any longer their golden harvest. One afternoon, after having dined with his friend, Squire Gobbledown, he came home, and complained of not feeling very well. By his directions, I prepared for him some of his elixir sanitatis, composed of brandy and bitters, of which he took an inordinate dose. Shortly after, he was seized with a fit of apoplexy, and before bedtime, in spite of all the drugs in the shop, which I poured down with unsparing hand, he had breathed his last. In three days, Ramshorne was quietly deposited in the churchyard, in the midst of those he had sent there before him.

"Having resided with the Doctor for several years, I had become pretty well known throughout the neighborhood, particularly among the old ladies, whose good graces I had always sedulously cultivated. I accordingly resolved to commence quacking — I mean practising — on my own account. Having obtained my late master's stock of drugs from his widow at an easy rate, and displaying my own name in golden letters as his successor, to work I went, with the internal resolve that where Ramshorne had given one dose, I would give six.

"For a time, Fortune seemed to smile upon me, and everything went on well. All the old women were loud in sounding my praises, far and near. The medicaments of my master, continued to be in demand, and treacle, brick dust, and alum came to a good market. Some drawbacks, however, I occasionally met with. Having purchased the patent right of one of Thompson's steam baths, in my first experiment I came near flaying alive a rheumatic tanner, who had submitted himself to the operation. By an unfortunate mistake in regulating the steam he was nearly parboiled; and it was supposed that the thickness of his hide alone preserved his vitals uninjured. I was myself threatened with the fate of Marsyas, by the enraged sufferer; which he was happily prevented from attempting to inflict, by a return of his malady, which has never since left him. I however after this gave up steaming, and confined myself to regular practice. At length, either the charm of novelty wearing off, or people beginning to discover the inefficacy of the old nostrums, I was obliged to exert my wits to invent new ones. These I generally took the precaution to try upon cats or dogs, before using them upon the human system. They were, however, mostly of an innocent nature, and I satisfied my conscience with the reflection, that if they did no good, they could at least do no harm. Happy would it have been for me, could I always have done thus. Meeting with success in my first efforts, I by degrees ventured upon more active ingredients. At length in an evil hour, I invented a curious mixture composed of forty-nine different articles. This I dubbed in high-flowing

terms 'The Antidote to Death, or the Eternal Elixir of Longevity;' knowing full well that though

'A rose might smell as sweet by any other name,'

yet would not my drugs find as good a sale under a more humble title. This cursed compound proved the antidote to all my hopes of success. Besides forcing me to quit the village in a confounded hurry, it has embittered my life ever since, and reduced me to the ragged and miserable plight in which you see me.

"I dare say you have met with that species of old women, so frequent in all country towns, who, seeming to have outlived the common enjoyments of life, and outworn the ordinary sources of excitement, seek fresh stimulus in scenes of distress, and appear to take a morbid pleasure in beholding the varieties of human suffering and misery. One of the most noted characters in the village was an old beldame of this description. Granny Gordon, so she was familiarly denominated, was the rib of the village Vulcan, and the din of her eternal tongue was only equalled by the ringing of her husband's anvil. Thin and withered away in person and redolent with snuff, she bore no small resemblance to a newly-exhumed mummy, and to all appearance promised to last as long as one of those ancient dames of Egypt. Not a death, a burial, a fit of sickness, a casualty, nor any of the common calamities of life ever occurred in the vicinity, but Granny Gordon made it her especial business to be present. Wrapped in an old scarlet cloak, — that hideous cloak! the thought of it makes me shudder — she might be seen hovering about the dwelling of the sick. Watching her opportunity, she would make her way into the patient's

chamber, and disturb his repose with long dismal stories and ill-boding predictions; and if turned from the house, which was not unfrequently the case, she would depart, muttering threats and abuse.

"As the Indians propitiate the favor of the devil, so had I, in my eagerness to acquire popularity, made a firm friend and ally, though rather a troublesome one, of this old woman. She was one of my best customers, and, provided it was something new, and had a high-sounding name to recommend it, would take my most nauseous compounds with the greatest relish. Indeed the more disgusting was the dose, the greater in her opinion was its virtue.

"I had just corked the last bottle of my antidote, when a message came to tell me that Granny Gordon had one of her old fits, and wanted some new doctor-stuff, as the old physic did n't do her any more good. Not having yet given my new pharmaceutic preparation a trial, I felt a little doubtful about its effects, but trusting to the toughness of the old woman's system, I ventured to send a potion, with directions to take it cautiously. Not many minutes had elapsed, before the messenger returned, in breathless haste, to say that Mrs. Gordon was much worse, and that though she had taken all the stuff, they believed she was dying. With a vague foreboding of evil, I seized my hat, and hastened to the blacksmith's. On entering the chamber my eyes were greeted with a sad spectacle. Granny Gordon, bolstered up in the bed, holding in her hand the bottle I had sent her, drained of its contents, sat gasping for breath, and occasionally agitated by strong convulsions. A cold sweat rested on her

forehead, her eyes seemed dim and glazed, her nose, which was usually of a ruby hue, was purple and peaked, and her whole appearance evidently betokened approaching dissolution.

"Around the bed were collected some half dozen withered beldames who scowled upon me, as I entered, with ill-omened visages. Her husband, a drunken brute, who used to beat his better half six times a week, immediately began to load me with abuse, accusing me of having poisoned his dear, dear wife, and threatening to be the death of me, if she died.

"My conscience smote me. I felt stupefied and bewildered, and knew not which way to turn. At this moment, the patient perceiving me, with a hideous contortion of countenance, the expression of which I shall carry to my dying hour, and a voice between a scream and a groan, held up the empty bottle, and exclaimed, 'This is your doing, you villainous quack you' (here she was seized with hiccup);—'you have poisoned me, you have' (here fearful spasms shook her whole frame);—'but I 'll be revenged; day and night my ghost shall haunt'— here her voice became inarticulate, and shaking her withered arm at me, she fell back, and to my extreme horror, gave up the ghost. This was too much for my nerves. I rushed from the house, and ran home with the dying curse ringing in my ears, fancying that I saw her hideous physiognomy, grinning from every bush and tree that I passed. Knowing that as soon as the noise of this affair should get abroad, the village would be too hot to hold me, I resolved to decamp as silently as possible. First throwing all my recently manufactured anodyne into the canal,

that it should not rise in judgment against me, I made up a little bundle of clothes, and taking my seat in the mail stage, which was passing at the time and fortunately empty, in a couple of days I found myself in the great city of New York. Having a little money with me, I hired a mean apartment in an obscure part of the city, in the hope that I might remain concealed till all search after me should be over, when I might find some opportunity of getting employment, or of resuming my old profession, under happier auspices. By degrees the few dollars I brought with me were expended, and after pawning my watch and some of my clothes, I found myself reduced to the last shilling. But not the fear of impending starvation, nor the dread of a jail, are to be compared to the horrors I nightly suffer. Granny Gordon has been as good as her word. Every night, at the solemn hour of twelve" (here he looked fearfully around) — " her ghost appears to me, wrapped in a red cloak, with her gray hairs streaming from beneath an old nightcap of the same color, brandishing the vial, and accusing me of having poisoned her. These visitations have at length become so insupportable, that I have resolved to return and give myself up to justice; for I feel that hanging itself is better than this state of torment."

Here the young man ceased. I plainly saw that he was a little disordered in his intellect. To comfort him, however, I told him that if he had killed fifty old women, they could do nothing to him, if he had done it professionally. And as for the ghost, we would take means to have that put at rest, when we reached Utica.

About the gray of the morning, we arrived at the place of our destination. My *protégé* having unburthened his mind, seemed more at his ease, and taking a mint julep, prepared to accompany me on shore. As we were leaving the boat, several persons in a wagon drove down to the wharf. As soon as my companion observed them, he exclaimed with a start of surprise, "Hang me, if there is n't old Graham the sheriff, and lawyer Dickson, and Bill Gordon come to take me." As he spoke, his foot slipping, he lost his balance, and fell backwards into the canal. We drew him from the water, and as soon as the persons in the wagon perceived him, they one and all sprang out, and ran up with the greatest expressions of joyful surprise. "Why, Hippy, my lad," exclaimed the sheriff, "where have you been? All our town has been in a snarl about you. We all supposed you had been forcibly abducted. Judge Bates offered a reward of twenty dollars for your corpse. We have dragged the canal for more than a mile, and found a mass of bottles, which made us think you had been spirited away. Betsey Wilkins made her affidavit that she heard Bill Gordon swear that he would take your life, and here you see we have brought him down to have his trial. But come, come, jump in the wagon, we 'll take you up to the tavern, to get your duds dried, and tell you all about it."

Here a brawny fellow with a smutty face, who I found was Gordon the blacksmith, came up, and shaking Hippocrates by the hand, said, "By goles, Doctor, I am glad to see you. If you had n't come back I believe it would have gone hard with me. Come,

man, you must forgive the hard words I gave you. My old woman soon got well of her fit, after you went away, and says she thinks the stuff did her a mortal sight o' good."

It is impossible to describe the singular expression the countenance of the young man now exhibited. For some time he stood in mute amazement, shaking with cold, and gazing alternately at each of his friends as they addressed him; and it required their reiterated assurance to convince him, that Granny Gordon was still in the land of the living, and that he had not been haunted by a veritable ghost.

Wishing to obtain a further explanation of this strange scene, I accompanied them to the tavern. A plain-looking man in a farmer's dress, who was of the party, confirmed what the blacksmith had said, as to the supposed death of his wife and her subsequent recovery. "She was only in a swoond," said he, "but came to, soon after the Doctor had left her." He added that it was his private opinion that she would now last forever. He spoke of Hippocrates as a "'nation smart doctor, who had a power of larning, but gave severe doses."

After discussing a good breakfast, my young friend thanked me for the sympathy and interest I had taken in his behalf. He told me he intended returning to the practice of his profession. I admonished him to be more careful in the exhibition of his patent medicines, telling him that all old women had not nine lives. He shook hands with me, and, gayly jumping into the wagon, rode off with his friends.

THE NEW ENGLAND VILLAGE

SOME years ago it was my destiny to reside in a New England village. Nothing can be pleasanter than its situation. All that nature ever did for a place, she has done for this. It is sheltered on the north by high hills, and fringed on the south with forests of oaks and elms; it has waterfalls and cascades, and, what is more surprising, they are suffered to flow on through meadow and valley, without being condemned to the treadmill. In this country everything is compelled to do duty. Our forests are cut down for firewood; our rocks hewn into state prisons, and some of our modern speculators mean to make old Niagara, that has roared and bellowed so many hundred years for its own amusement, actually work for its living, and support cotton and woollen manufactures.

But to return to my village. It is not called a flourishing one, for there is no distillery, and no jail in it. But they have straw bonnet manufactories, working societies, and reading societies, and the females actually raised ten dollars fifty-two cents for the emancipation of the Greeks.

While I resided there, I became intimately acquainted with the clergyman, and it was my constant habit to call on him every evening for a stroll. He was just such a man as the ladies call a marrying man, yet, strange to tell, he was still a bachelor. There

was a village legend that he had been crossed in love; but disappointments of the heart generate suspicion and misanthropy, and no one could be more confiding and guileless than he was. His sensibilities seemed to be in their first spring. His fair smooth forehead, his broad chest and Boanerges voice, gave no evidence that he had wasted his health in scientific or theological pursuits; yet he was well read in Scripture, and could quote chapter and verse on every contested point. For many years he had made no use of a Concordance, for he was a living one himself. The practical part of his profession formed its beauty in him. He might well teach temperance, for necessary articles of food were all he coveted; he could talk of charity with the "tongue of an angel," for it was not with him tinkling brass or empty sound; from his five hundred dollars salary there was always an overplus, that brought upon him "the blessing of those that were ready to perish." Perhaps there was a little too much minuteness about worldly affairs, and yet it was an excellent example for others. There was also a bit too much of the parish register in his cast of mind; he could tell how many he had married, how many he had christened, and how many he had buried; how many prayers he had made, and how many sermons he had written. All this was very well; but when he undertook to know people's ages better than they did themselves, it would have been intolerably provoking, if he had not always been able to prove he was right by parish records. He had a love for agriculture that contributed to his health, and agreeably diversified his employments. The piece of land that was set off to

the parsonage was always in excellent order, and the invalids of his parish might count upon the first mess of peas and the first plate of strawberries from his garden.

Our walk often led by a farm that had once been the summer residence of an opulent family. The grounds were laid out originally with much taste; but it had passed into the hands of various owners. They had cut down the trees that they might not obstruct the view of the road, and suffered the buildings to go to decay, because it cost money to repair them. There was an air of desolate grandeur about the house, that inspired sensations wholly unlike the trim, square houses of the village. It was too far from the road, and too large to be tenanted. Besides, the farm was run out. In short, it was unpopular, and nobody would live on it. It was said that it might be "bought for a song," but it was so out of repair and so comfortless, that nobody appeared to purchase it. It had gone through the "pitiless pelting" of a severe winter uninhabited, and nothing could be more dreary than it looked, half buried in snow; but when the spring came on, and the grass grew green, and the wild roses blossomed, and the creepers hung clustering about the doors and windows, it was a place that might have tempted any lover of solitude and nature.

In a small country village, however, there are few who come under this class. All have a practical love of nature, but not many a sentimental one; and it was with a degree of contempt that it was discovered, in the month of June, that the house was actually inhabited. Much speculation was excited, and the place that

stood in desolate neglect became an object of curiosity and interest.

I had had some thoughts of purchasing the place, and tried to persuade myself that it would be a good way of investing a small sum, when I learnt that a Mr. Forester had been beforehand with me, and had taken possession of the house. I felt a degree of disappointment that the previously irresolute state of my mind by no means authorized. Soon after this occurrence, I quitted the village, and removed to a different part of the country.

Ten years passed away, and I made no effort to renew my intercourse with my old friend the clergyman. In consequence of indisposition I found it actually necessary last year to journey. My recollections immediately turned to the village where I had before found health, and I once more directed my course towards it.

It was on Sunday morning that I entered the town of H——, about ten miles from the village. I knew too well the primitive habits of my friend the clergyman, to break in upon his Sabbath morning, and I determined to remain where I was till the next day.

It is a church-going place. When I saw couple after couple pass the window of the tavern at which I had stationed myself in mere idleness, I began to feel an inclination to go to church too.

I entered the nearest one, and when the minister arose, found to my surprise that it was my old friend. He did not appear to have altered since I last saw him; his voice was equally powerful, his person rather fuller. I recognized in his prayers and sermon, the

same expressions he had used ten years ago — and why not? They were drawn from his book of knowledge. There was still the same simplicity and the same fervor that had first interested me, and when the services were over, and I shook hands with him, it seemed even to me, who am not given to illusion, that we had parted but yesterday. I tried to make out by his appearance whether he had married, but I was baffled — the outer man had undergone no change. He told me that he should return home after the evening service, and invited me to take a seat in his chaise with him. I readily accepted the invitation. When he called for me, he said, "Don't forget your portmanteau, for I must keep you at my house for a few days."

As we jogged along, for his horse never departed from his Sunday pace even on week days, I asked him what had become of the Foresters. "Do they still retain the farm that ought to have been mine?" said I. A color like the mellow tint of a russetine apple that had been perfectly preserved through the winter, rose in his cheek as he replied: "Part of the family are there; if you like I will give you an account of them." I assented; but when I found he was settling himself as if for a long story, my heart died within me. I knew his minuteness on every subject, and that to have added or diminished an iota would have been to him palpable fraud and injustice. By degrees, however, I became interested in his narrative.

"Soon after you left me, I became intimate with Mr. Forester. He was a sensible, intelligent man, and his wife was a very worthy woman. They had two children, who were full of health and gayety. Mr.

Forester entered upon farming with great zeal, and the place soon wore a different aspect. The venerable trees that had been cut down could not be restored, but repairs were made, the stone walls rebuilt, and all indicated that the new tenant was a man of order and good habits. He had not been accustomed to farming, but he was assiduous in finding out the best and most approved methods of ploughing, planting, and managing his land. Nothing could be more successful than his industry. The third year his crops were abundant, and his wife began to talk of her dairy, and exhibit her butter and cheese in the country style. The inhabitants of the village found they managed their affairs so well, that they were content to let them go on without interfering. Mrs. Forester accommodated herself to the habits and customs of those around her with wonderful facility, and was a general favorite.

"Instead of passing the house as you and I used to in our walk, I now every evening turned up the avenue, and spent half an hour with them. The children called me uncle, and ran to meet me; their mother, too, would follow them with a step almost as light. She played upon the guitar, and though I was not acquainted with the instrument, and thought it feeble compared to the bass viol, yet I loved to hear it chiming with her sweet voice.

"When I looked at this happy family, I felt new sympathies springing up in my heart, and began to be almost dissatisfied with my solitary home. I sometimes thought Mr. Forester was not as tranquil and contented as his wife; but he had lived in the world,

and it was natural that he should feel the want of that society to which he had been accustomed.

"It was on the third year of their residence in the village, that I was invited to visit them with more form than usual. Mrs. Forester said, that she and the children were going to celebrate the fifth anniversary of her marriage. She had many of the fanciful contrivances of her sex to give interest to the daily routine of life. She had placed her table under an arbor, covered with honeysuckles and sweetbrier, and loaded it with fruit and the abundance of her good housewifery. The grass that had been newly mown was distributed around us in heaps. At a little distance from the arbor, and behind it, stood the large barn, with the huge folding doors open at each end. Through this we had a view of the house, and beyond it the country round, with its fields waving with grain, its peaceful streams, its green valleys, its distant hills, and, what in my opinion added greatly to the beauty of the prospect, the spire of my own church rising from a grove of trees. I must not forget to mention the Merrimack that was in front of us, moving on in the majesty of its deep, blue waters, and bearing on its bosom the various craft of inland navigation. It was a glorious scene, and we all felt it such. 'Here at least,' said I, 'we may worship God in the temple of his own beauty!' I looked at Mrs. Forester. Women have quick sensibilities. I saw the tears were coursing each other down her cheeks; but they were like the raindrops of summer, and her smiles returned more gayly. The children had taken many a trip from the house to the arbor, with their baskets and aprons loaded with cakes

and fruits. We all gathered round the table. Mrs. Forester was as gay as her children. She played upon her guitar, and sung modern songs, which I am sorry to say had more music than sense in them. In the midst of one of these we heard footsteps. A man stood at the entrance of the arbor, and laid his hand on Mr. Forester's shoulder. He started, and turned round; then, taking the man by the arm, walked away. 'I wish,' said Mrs. Forester impatiently, 'he had not interrupted us just as we were so happy.'

"'Do you know him?' said I. 'No,' she replied, 'I can't say I do, and yet I remember seeing him soon after we were married. I believe,' added she, coloring and laughing, 'I never told you that ours was a runaway match. It has turned out so well, and our troubles have terminated so happily, that I am not afraid to confess my imprudence to you. I was an orphan, and lived with my grandmother, who was as different from me in her habits and opinions as old people usually are from young ones. She thought singing was bad for the lungs, that dancing would throw me into a fever, and the night air into a consumption. I differed from her in all these opinions, and yet was obliged to conform. After I became acquainted with Mr. Forester, we differed still more. She said he was a stranger that nobody knew; I said I knew him perfectly. In short, she told me if I intended to marry him, she would forbid the banns. I thought it best to save her the trouble, and so I tied up a little bundle, and walked off with my husband that is now.

"'The good old lady lived to see him well estab-

lished in business as a lawyer, and became quite reconciled. I loved her sincerely, and now that I was independent, willingly accommodated myself to her habits. She died soon after the birth of my first child, Ellen, who was named for her. She left me five thousand dollars, which is now invested in this farm, and I trust will be the inheritance of my children.'

"'May I ask,' said I, 'why you left your native place?' 'I hardly know,' said she; 'my husband thought the air did not agree with him. He grew melancholy and abstracted, and then I began to dislike it too, and was quite ready to quit it. We removed to B——. My husband carried his reputation and talents with him, and was again successful in the practice of law. In the course of a few months his complaints returned, and he then thought it was country air he wanted, and an entire change of life. The event has proved so. We quitted the languid and enervating climate of the South, and travelled North. We gave up all our former associations, and to make the change more complete, my husband took the name of an uncle who brought him up, and relinquished his own. It is now three years since we have resided here, and I don't know that he has had any return of ill health or nervous affections since.'

"At that moment Mr. Forester returned, accompanied by the stranger. He approached his wife, and said, 'Here is an old acquaintance, Mary; you must make him welcome.' There was an expression in the countenance of the guest that appalled us. It seemed to communicate its baleful influence to the whole circle. Mr. Forester looked pale and anxious;

the gayety was gone; nobody sung or laughed; we scarcely spoke. All was changed. The stranger seemed to have had a blighting effect on the master of the house; for from this time his health and spirits gradually forsook him. Signs of poverty appeared, and he announced to his wife that he must move elsewhere. She was thunderstruck. The legacy of her aunt had been invested in the purchase of the farm. To give up that was relinquishing the inheritance of her children. She remonstrated, but without effect; he declined all explanation. With deep regret I saw them quit the village.

"Mrs. Forester had promised to write me when they were again fixed in any permanent situation. It was nearly two years before I received a letter. That letter I have now in my pocket-book. It has remained there since I first received it. Here it is!"

I knew too well his exact habits to be surprised at the perfect state of preservation in which I saw it. It was as follows: —

"I rejoice that I can give you cheerful accounts, my much respected friend, of my husband and myself. After we left you, we removed to a remote town in the West, and here we are. We have given up farming, and my husband has opened an office. As he is the only lawyer in the place, he has made his way extremely well. I wish I could say I am as happy as you once saw me; but this mode of life is not to my taste, nor do I think it agrees with my husband. I have never seen him so tranquil as the three short years we passed at N——. There is something in the life of a farmer peculiarly soothing. The sun

never rose so bright to me as at that period. I do not think Eve was as happy in her paradise as I was in mine; for her fruits grew spontaneously, but mine were produced by the united efforts of head and hands, and gave exercise to all my powers. My children are well. My husband's health is not very good; this plodding life does not agree with him; he is subject to low spirits. I sometimes have sad forebodings of the future; if I could only get back to N——, I think all would go well."

This was the purport of the letter. I returned it to my friend, and he resumed his narrative.

"About a year from the time I received the letter, I took a journey to Montreal to visit a sister who was settled there. In passing one of the streets I recognized Mr. Forester; but he was so altered in his appearance that I doubted if it could be he. He held out his hand, and I found, upon inquiring, that they had made another remove to Montreal. He was emaciated in his person, and there was a nervous agitation in his manner that alarmed me. I begged him to conduct me to his wife. 'With all my heart,' said he, 'but you will be surprised at our *ménage*.' I accompanied him to a low, dilapidated building, in which everything bespoke poverty. Mrs. Forester gave me a mournful welcome. She, too, was greatly changed; but her children were still blooming and healthy, and appeared unconscious of the cloud that hung over their parents.

"My visit was short; I perceived it was an embarrassing one; but in taking leave, I said, 'If you have any commands to your old friends at N——,

here is my address.' I had not been home long, before William Forester brought me a note from his mother, requesting to see me. I immediately returned with him, and found her alone. She was free and undisguised in her communication; said there was some dreadful mystery hung over them, and that whatever it was, it was hurrying her husband to the grave. 'I should not have spoken,' added she, 'had not this conviction made all scruples weigh light in the balance. I think it possible he may reveal to you what he will not to me. At least, see him before you quit Montreal. If we could once more return to N——, we might yet be happy.'

"I again called to see him. Never was there a human being more changed. He was dull, abstracted, and silent; and I began to think his mind was impaired. I used every argument in my power to persuade him to return to N——, and tried to convince him it was a duty he owed to his wife and children. He only replied that it would do no good; neither they nor he would be happier; that there was nothing I could say to him with regard to himself that his own mind had not suggested. He acknowledged that he had a secret source of calamity, but said it was beyond human power to mitigate it, that the kindest part would be to let him alone; that he had never intruded his sorrows on others, and he asked no participation; that happily there was a termination to all things here, and his sufferings could not last forever. I told him, that if he was alone in the world, he might reason justly; but he must feel that there was one human being at least, that was doomed to participate in his good or

bad fortune, and who was made wretched by his mysterious conduct.

"'Has she spoken to you?' said he fiercely.

"'There needs no other language,' replied I, 'than her pale cheek and wasted form. You, who see her daily, cannot realize the change that has taken place; but I, who saw her last at N——, blooming, and happy, full of health and gayety, alive to all that was beautiful in creation — can I agree with you that you alone are the sufferer?' I found I had touched the chord to which his heart vibrated; I pursued the subject, and finally obtained the victory. He promised me solemnly to return in the course of a few weeks.

"It was with heartfelt pleasure I set about preparing for them. I had the old shattered mansion put into comfortable repair, and took a half a year's salary in pork, grain, and live stock, much to the satisfaction of my parishioners, who had rather pay in produce than money, and it was all cheerfully transferred to the desolate building. It was the last day of November when they arrived, and the snow lay three feet deep on the ground. The old trees that remained with their dry, straggling branches, stood on each side of the avenue like a procession of mourners. In winter there is but little for a farmer to do, except foddering his cattle and preparing for the coming spring. Mr. Forester had no stock or materials, and his life was an idle one. I could not but think Providence had wonderfully marked its bounty to the other sex, when I saw how cheerfully and constantly Mrs. Forester found employment. Her color and spirit returned,

and again I heard her singing songs that seemed only made for summer.

"I have hitherto said but little of myself. I had dwindled into a kind of insignificance in my own mind, and was thought to be a confirmed old bachelor. Even my neighbor, Miss Keziah Spinney, no longer attempted to pour in the oil and the wine, but passed on to the other side. I confess, however, that I sometimes looked back with lingering regret on the years I had loitered away. I could count up to fifty-two. After twenty-five they were all dull, cheerless blanks except in the way of duty, and every faithful minister knows how many omissions must press upon his recollection. March had arrived, and we had reasonable expectations that the severity of the winter was over; but it did not prove so. There came a violent driving snowstorm, and I did not visit the Foresters for several days. At length I received a message from them requesting to see me. Mrs. Forester met me at the door. 'My husband,' said she, 'is very ill. Do you remember our visitor on the fifth anniversary of our marriage? Twice since he has come. God knows what malignant power he has over us; but it is terrible in its effects. Yesterday he came suddenly upon us; his visit was short, but immediately after his departure, my husband complained of great oppression upon the lungs, and this morning he has been seized with a hemorrhage. O my dear friend,' continued she, wringing my hand, 'go to him, tell him there is nothing he can reveal so dreadful as this suspense. I can endure it no longer; my reason will be the sacrifice.'

"I hastened to his apartment. He was in bed; his countenance was pale, but calm. 'I am glad you have come,' said he; 'I have a confession to make.' At that moment his wife entered. He called her to his bedside, and, as she knelt down, he looked earnestly at her, and his courage appeared to fail. But in a few moments he resumed. 'I had hoped that I might die with my secret unrevealed; but now that I believe myself on my death-bed, the judgment of my fellow-creatures loses its importance. And yet,' said he, turning to his wife, 'to voluntarily relinquish your esteem, to be remembered by you only with horror! O, if suffering could expiate guilt, these pangs would atone!'

"Never shall I forget the expression of her countenance, the noble, the sublime expression, as she leaned over him. 'My friend, my husband,' said she, 'fear nothing from me. Whatever may be the circumstances to which you allude, they cannot now influence my affection. The years we have passed together are all that identify you with me. Speak without hesitation.'

"'I will be brief,' said he, 'for my strength is failing. My early life was one of dissipation and profligacy. My father gave me all the opportunities of a good education, and a lucrative profession. He died, and left my mother destitute. I persuaded myself it was a duty to run all risks to place her in an independent situation. Frequently I returned from the gambling table, and poured money into her lap. The poor, deceived parent blessed and applauded me. I went through all the changes of a gamester, and at

length found myself deeply in debt. A horrible chance presented — it was one of fraud and treachery. I purloined a sum entrusted to me — was detected!' — he seemed unable to proceed. 'I was sentenced to two years' imprisonment,' continued he, in a low voice. 'Though sunk and degraded, I was not lost. I loathed the vices that had undone me. I turned with horror from the profligacy by which I was surrounded. My conduct was such that the term of my imprisonment was shortened. I received a pardon. My poor mother had died broken-hearted. I quitted Havana; for this was the scene of my guilt and disgrace. At Richmond I by degrees gained access to good society. I was persevering and industrious. You know, my dear Mary, how I became acquainted with you, and now you may perceive that when I married you, I added a new crime, that of deception, to my catalogue of sins. I truly loved you, and I could not resist temptation. My business was lucrative, everything around me prosperous, and if vice had left no sting, I might have been the happiest of mortals. But not all the rivers of Damascus, nor the waters of Jordan, can wash out the stains of the soul. I was haunted by remembrance of the past. There was something so unlike retributive justice in my prosperity, that I felt as if even this success portended some dreadful reverse. Fool that I was, not to perceive that the terror and anxiety that consumed my hours, was retributive justice! When I pressed her whom I loved best to my bosom, I thought what would become of her if she knew she was the wife of a felon!

"'Such was the state of my mind while everybody

congratulated me on my happiness. I was nominated for an office of trust. A few days after the election had taken place, I received a note requesting me to come to a particular place if I would avoid public disgrace. I went to the spot with a beating heart, and found, to my horror, a fellow convict! When I quitted the prison, I had left him there. He had stayed out his term, and accident brought him to Richmond. His object was to extort money. I gave him what he asked, as the bribe of secrecy. Again and again he came. My anxiety grew insupportable. Horrible thoughts crossed my mind. I sometimes felt that either he or I must be sacrificed. I gave up all but my wife and children, and left Richmond in hopes of concealment from my persecutor. The rest you know. As soon as I began to acquire credit and property, my tormentor appeared, and nearly stripped me. For three years, I lived on this spot unmolested; and I began to think he was dead. You know how, in the midst of apparent security and happiness, he came upon us. Twice he has visited me since. Yesterday he arrived. But Heaven is merciful. The disorder that for months has been undermining my life is brought to a crisis. With the near prospect of death, I have gained fortitude. I might say something in extenuation of my guilt. But why should I? — There is a Judge, and he is merciful.'

"Such was the unhappy man's story. He was mistaken in believing his end so near. He lingered on for months. His confession had rendered the scourge of his persecutor powerless. His decay was gradual, and he lived till June. His wife and myself were his

constant attendants. He saw that her affection was undiminished; that it was the labor of love, and not of compassion, that bound her to his side. He died, trusting in divine mercy, and commending to my care his wife and children."

"And you have performed this dying injunction most faithfully, I doubt not," said I to the good man.

Again the color rose to his cheek. "I have," said he, "to the best of my power. At the end of two years, Mrs. Forester kindly consented to marry me. Her children are as dear to me as if they were my own." We had now entered the little village of N——. It was still flourishing in its native beauty. The green banks, with their footpaths, still bordered the carriage road, and clusters of dandelions, purple thistles, and mallows were scattered by the wayside with their former profusion. The low schoolhouse with its tall chimney stood where I left it. The paths that led through the pastures still remained the same. We were now near the parsonage house. I asked no questions, for I was willing to wait the development of circumstances. I was not much surprised when we turned up the avenue that led to the old-fashioned house.

"This is my residence," said the clergyman, "and I let out the parsonage." We stopped. The lady came to the door to meet us. She seemed to have gone along with all things else. Her hair, when I last saw her, was glossy and brown; it was now covered with a white muslin cap, and was parted upon her forehead in a matron-like manner.

I passed a few days with them, and took leave with the novel conclusion, that if there was any happiness in this world, it was to be found in a country village, where there were no "improvements," and at the house of a country minister.

THE BALD EAGLE

"I 'll have you chronicled, and chronicled, and cut and chronicled, and sung in all-to-be-praised sonnets, and grav'd in new brave ballads, that all tongues shall troule you in Sæcula Sæculorum." — OLD COMEDY.

IN one of the little villages sprinkled along the delicious valley of the Connecticut, there stood, not many years ago, a little tavern called the Bald Eagle. It was an old-fashioned building with a small antique portico in front, where, of a lazy summer afternoon, the wise men of the village assembled to read newspapers, talk politics, and drink beer. Before the door stood a tall yellow signpost, from which hung a white sign emblazoned with a fierce bald-headed eagle, holding an olive branch in one claw, and a flash of forked lightning in the other. Underneath was written in large black letters, "The Bald Eagle: Good Entertainment for Man and Beast: by Jonathan Dewlap, Esq."

One calm, sultry summer evening, the knot of village politicians had assembled, according to custom, at the tavern door. At the entrance sat the landlord, Justice of the Peace and Quorum, lolling in a rocking-chair, and dozing over the columns of an electioneering handbill. Along the benches of the portico were seated the village attorney, the schoolmaster, the tailor, and other personages of less note, but not less idle, nor less devoted to the affairs of the nation.

To this worthy assembly of patriotic citizens the schoolmaster was drowsily doling forth the contents of the latest Gazette. It was at that memorable epoch of our national history when Lafayette returned to visit, in the evening of his days, the land that owed so much to his youthful enthusiasm; and to see, in the soft decline of life, the consummation of his singular glory, in the bosom of that country where it first began. His approach was everywhere hailed with heart-stirring joy. There was but one voice throughout the land, and every village through which he passed hailed him with rural festivities, addresses, odes, and a dinner at the tavern.

Every step of his journey was regularly and minutely recorded in those voluminous chronicles of our country, the newspapers; and column after column was filled with long notices of the dinners he had eaten, and of the toasts drank, and of the songs sung on the occasion.

As the schoolmaster detailed to the group around him an account of these busy festivals, which were so rapidly succeeding each other all over the country, the little soul he possessed kindled up within him. With true oratorical emphasis he repeated a long list of toasts, drank on a recent celebration of the kind, — "The American Eagle," "The Day we celebrate," "The New England Fair," "The Heroes who fought, bled, and died at Bunker Hill, of which I am one!" — and a thousand others equally patriotic. He was interrupted by the merry notes of the stage horn, twanging in long-drawn blasts over the blue hills that skirted the village; and shortly after a cloud of dust

came rolling its light volume along the road, and the stagecoach wheeled up to the door.

It was driven by a stout, thick-set young fellow, with a glowing red face, that peeped out from under the wide brim of a white hat, like the setting sun from beneath a summer cloud. He was dressed in a wren-tailed gingham coat, with pocket holes outside, and a pair of gray linen pantaloons, buttoned down each leg with a row of yellow bell buttons. His vest was striped with red and blue, and around his neck he wore a colored silk handkerchief, tied in a loose knot before, and tucked in at the waistband. Beside him on his coach box sat two dusty travellers in riding-caps, and the group within presented an uncomfortable picture of the miseries of travelling in a stagecoach in the month of June.

In an instant all was noise and confusion in the bar-room of the inn. Travellers that had just arrived, and those about to set off in the evening coach, came crowding in with their baggage, — some eager to secure places, and others lodgings. A noisy group was gathered at the bar, within which the landlady was bouncing to and fro in a huff, and jingling a great bunch of keys, like some wild animal at a raree-show, stalking about its cage, whisking its tail, and jingling its iron chain.

The fireplace was filled with pine boughs and asparagus tops; and over it the wall was covered with advertisements of new-invented machines, patent medicines, tollgate and turnpike companies, and coarse prints of steamboats, stagecoaches, opposition lines, and Fortune's home forever. In one corner stood an

old-fashioned oaken settee, with high back and crooked elbows, which served as a seat by day, and a bed by night; in another was a pile of trunks and different articles of a traveller's equipage; travelling-coats hung here and there about the room; and the atmosphere was thick with the smoke of tobacco and the fumes of brandy.

At length the sound of wheels was heard at the door. "Stage ready!" shouted the coachman, putting his head in at the door: there was a hurry and bustle about the room; the travellers crowded out; a short pause succeeded; the carriage door was slammed to in haste; and the coach wheeled away, and disappeared in the dusk of evening.

The sound of its wheels had hardly ceased to be heard, when the tailor entered the bar-room with a newspaper in his hand, and strutted up to the squire and the schoolmaster, who sat talking together upon the settee, with a step that would have done honor to the tragedy hero of a strolling theatre. He had just received the tidings that Lafayette was on his way north. The stage driver had brought the news; the passengers confirmed it; it was in the newspapers; and of course there could be no doubt upon the subject. It now became a general topic of conversation in the bar-room. The villagers came in one by one: all were on tiptoe; all talked together, — Lafayette, the Marquis, the Gin'ral! He would pass through the village in two days from then. What was to be done? The town authorities were at their wits' end, and were quite as anxious to know how they should receive their venerable guest as they were to receive him.

In the meantime the news took wing. There was a crowd at the door of the Post Office, talking with becoming zeal upon the subject : the boys in the street gave three cheers, and shouted " Lafayette forever!" and in less than ten minutes the approaching jubilee was known and talked of in every nook and corner of the village. The town authorities assembled in the little back parlor of the inn, to discuss the subject more at leisure over a mug of cider, and conclude upon the necessary arrangements for the occasion. Here they continued with closed doors until a late hour; and, after much debate, finally resolved to decorate the tavern hall, prepare a great dinner, order out the militia, and take the General by surprise. The lawyer was appointed to write an oration, and the schoolmaster an ode, for the occasion.

As night advanced, the crowd gradually dispersed from the street. Silence succeeded to the hum of rejoicing, and nothing was heard throughout the village but the occasional bark of a dog, the creaking of the tavern sign, and the no less musical accents of the one-keyed flute of the schoolmaster, who, perched at his chamber window in nightgown and slippers, serenaded the neighborhood with Fire on the Mountains and half of Washington's March; whilst the grocer, who lived next door, roused from sweet dreams of treacle and brown sugar, lay tossing in his bed, and wishing the deuce would take the schoolmaster, with his Latin and his one-keyed flute.

As day began to peep, next morning, the tailor was seen to issue out of the inn yard in the landlord's yellow wagon, with the negro hostler Cæsar mounted

behind, thumping about in the tail of the vehicle, and grinning with huge delight. As the gray of morning mellowed, life began its course again in the little village. The cock hailed the daylight cheerly; the sheep bleated from the hills; the sky grew softer and clearer; the blue mountains caught the rising sun; and the mass of white vapor, that filled the valley, began to toss and roll itself away, like ebb of a feathery sea. Then the bustle of advancing day began: doors and windows were thrown open; the gate creaked on its hinge; carts rattled by; villagers were moving in the streets; and the little world began to go, like some ponderous machine, that, wheel after wheel, is gradually put in motion.

In a short time the tailor was seen slowly returning along the road, with a wagonload of pine boughs and evergreens. The wagon was unloaded at the tavern door, and its precious cargo carried up into the hall, where the tailor, in his shirt sleeves, danced and capered about the room, with a hatchet in one hand and a long knife in the other, like an Indian warrior before going to battle. In a moment the walls were stripped of the faded emblems of former holidays: garlands of withered roses were trampled underfoot; old stars, that had lost their lustre, were seen to fall; and the white pine chandelier was robbed of its yellow coat, and dangled from the ceiling, quite woe-begone and emaciated. But erelong the whole room was again filled with arches, and garlands, and festoons, and stars, and all kinds of singular devices in green leaves and asparagus tops. Over the chimney-piece were suspended two American flags, with a portrait

of General Washington beneath them; and the names of Trenton, Yorktown, Bunker Hill, etc., peeped out from between the evergreens, cut in red morocco, and fastened to the wall with a profusion of brass nails. Every part of the room was liberally decorated with paper eagles; and in a corner hung a little black ship, rigged with twine, and armed with a whole broadside of umbrella tips.

It were in vain to attempt a description of all the wonders that started up beneath the tailor's hand, as from the touch of a magician's wand. In a word, before night everything was in readiness. Travellers, that arrived in the evening, brought information that the General would pass through the village at noon the next day, but without the slightest expectation of the jubilee that awaited him. The tailor was beside himself with joy, at the news, and pictured to himself with good-natured self-complacency the surprise and delight of the venerable patriot, when he should receive the public honors prepared for him, and the new blue coat, with bright buttons and velvet collar, which was then making at his shop.

In the meantime the landlady had been busy in making preparations for a sumptuous dinner; the lawyer had been locked up all day, hard at work upon his oration; and the pedagogue was hard ridden by the phantom of a poetic eulogy, that bestrode his imagination like the nightmare. Nothing was heard in the village but the bustle of preparation, and the martial music of drums and fifes. For a while the ponderous wheel of labor seemed to stand still. The clatter of the cooper's mallet was silent; the painter left his brush,

the cobbler his awl; and the blacksmith's bellows lay sound asleep, with its nose buried in the ashes.

The next morning at daybreak the whole military force of the town was marshalled forth in front of the tavern, "armed and equipped as the law directs." Conspicuous among this multitude stood the tailor, arrayed in a coat of his own making, all lace and buttons, and a pair of buff pantaloons, drawn up so tight that he could hardly touch his feet to the ground. He wore a military hat, shaped like a clam shell, with little white goose feathers stuck all round the edge. By his side stood the gigantic figure of the blacksmith, in rusty regimentals. At length the roll of the drum announced the order for forming the ranks, and the valiant host displayed itself in a long wavering line. Here stood a tall lantern-jawed fellow, all legs, furbished up with a red waistcoat and shining green coat, a little round wool hat perched on the back of his head, and downward tapering off in a pair of yellow nankeens, twisted and wrinkled about the knees, as if his legs had been screwed into them. Beside him stood a long-waisted being, with a head like a hurra's nest, set off with a willow hat, and a face that looked as if it were made of sole leather, and a gash cut in the middle of it for a mouth. Next came a little man with fierce black whiskers and sugar-loaf hat, equipped with a long fowling piece, a powder horn, and a white canvas knapsack with a red star on the back of it; then a country bumpkin standing bolt upright, his head elevated, his toes turned out, holding fast to his gun with one hand, and keeping the other spread out upon his right thigh. Then figured the descendant of some Revolutionary

veteran, arrayed in the uniform and bearing the arms and accoutrements of his ancestor, a cocked hat on his head, a heavy musket on his shoulder, and on his back a large knapsack marked U. S. Here was a man in straw hat and gingham jacket; and there a pale, nervous fellow, buttoned up to the chin in a drab great-coat, to guard him against the morning air, and keep out the fever and ague.

"Attention the whole! Front face! Eyes right! Eyes left! Steady! Attention to the roll call!" shouted the blacksmith, in a voice like a volcano.

"Peleg Popgun!"

"Here."

"Tribulation Sheepshanks!"

"He-e-e-re."

"Return Jonathan Babcock!"

"Here."

And so on through a whole catalogue of long, hard names.

"Attention! Shoulder — arms! Very well. Fall back there on the extreme left! No talking in the ranks! Present — arms! Squire Wiggins, you 're not in the line; if you please, a little farther in, a little farther out; there, I guess that will do! Carry — arms! Very well done. Quick time, upon your post — march!

The little red-coated drummer flourished his drum-sticks, the bandy-legged fifer struck up Yankee Doodle, Cæsar showed his flat face over the horizon of a great bass drum, like the moon in an eclipse, the tailor brandished his sword, and the whole company, wheeling with some confusion round the tavern signpost,

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streamed down the road, covered with dust, and followed by a troop of draggle-tailed boys.

As soon as this company had disappeared, and the dub of its drum ceased to be heard, the too-too of a shrill trumpet sounded across the plains, and a troop of horse came riding up. The leader was a jolly, round-faced butcher, with a red foxtail nodding over his head, and came spurring on, with his elbows flapping up and down like a pair of wings. As he approached the tavern, he ordered the troop to wheel, and form a line in front, — a manœuvre which, though somewhat arduous, was nevertheless executed with wonderful skill and precision.

This body of light horse was the pride of the whole country round, and was mounted and caparisoned in a style of splendor that dazzled the eyes of all the village. Each horseman wore a cap of bearskin crested with a foxtail, a short blue jacket faced with yellow and profusely ornamented with red morocco and quality binding. The pantaloons were of the same color as the jacket, and were trimmed with yellow cord. Some rode with long stirrups, some with short stirrups, and some with no stirrups at all; some sat perpendicular upon their saddles, some at an obtuse angle, and others at an angle of forty-five. One was mounted on a tall one-eyed bone setter, with his tail and ears cropped; another on a little red nag, with shaggy mane and long switch tail, and as vicious as if the very devil were in him. Here was a great fellow, with long curly whiskers, looking as fierce as Mars himself; there, a little hook-nosed creature, with red crest, short spurs, elbows stuck out, and jacket cocked up behind, look-

ing like a barn door "*rooster*," with his tail clipped, just preparing to crow.

When this formidable troop was formed to the satisfaction of their leader, the word of command was given, and they went through the sword exercise, hewing and cutting the air in all directions with the most cool and deliberate courage. The order was then given to draw pistols. Ready! Aim! Fire! Pop-pop-poo, went the pistols. Too-too-too, went the trumpet. The horses took fright at the sound: some plunged; others reared and kicked; and others started out of the line, and capered up and down "*like mad*." The captain being satisfied with this display of the military discipline of his troop, they wheeled off in sections, and rode gallantly into the tavern yard, to recruit from the fatigues of the morning.

Crowds of country people now came driving in from all directions, to see the fun and the General. The honest farmer, in broad-brimmed hat and broad-skirted coat, jogged slowly on, with his wife and half a dozen blooming daughters, in a square top chaise; and country beaux, in all their Sunday finery, came racing along in wagons, or parading round on horseback to win a sidelong look from some fair country lass in gypsy hat and blue ribbons.

In the meantime the schoolmaster was far from being idle. His scholars had been assembled at an early hour, and after a deal of drilling and good advice were arranged in a line in front of the schoolhouse, to bask in the sun and wait for the General. The little girls had wreaths of roses upon their heads, and baskets of flowers in their hands; and the boys carried

Bibles, and wore papers on their hats inscribed "Welcome, Lafayette." The schoolmaster walked up and down before them, with a rattan in his hand, repeating to himself his poetic eulogy; stopping now and then to rap some unlucky little rogue over the knuckles for misdemeanor; shaking one to make him turn out his toes, and pulling another's ear to make him hold up his head and look like a man.

In this manner the morning wore away, and the hour at which it had been rumored that the General was to arrive drew near. The whole military force, both foot and horse, was then summoned together in front of the tavern, and formed into a hollow square, and the colonel, a swarthy knight of the forge, by the aid of a scrawl, written by the squire and placed in the crown of his hat, made a most eloquent and patriotic harangue, in which he called the soldiers his "brothers in arms, the hope of their country, the terror of their enemies, the bulwark of liberty, and the safeguard of the fair sex." They were then wheeled back again into a line, and dismissed for ten minutes.

An hour or two previous, an honest old black, named Boaz, had been stationed upon the highroad, not far from the entrance of the village, equipped with a loaded gun, which he was ordered to discharge by way of signal, as soon as the General should appear. Full of the importance and dignity of his office, Boaz marched to and fro across the dusty road, with his musket ready cocked and his finger on the trigger. This manœuvring in the sun, however, diminished the temperature of his enthusiasm in proportion as it increased that of his body, till at length he sat down

on a stump in the shade, and, leaning his musket against the trunk of a tree, took a short-stemmed pipe out of his pocket, and began to smoke. As noon drew near, he grew hungry and homesick; his heart sunk into his stomach. His African philosophy dwindled apace into a mere theory. Overpowered by the heat of the weather he grew drowsy; his pipe fell from his mouth; his head lost its equipoise, and dropped, like a poppy, upon his breast; and sliding gently from his seat, he fell asleep at the root of the tree. He was aroused from his slumber by the noise of an empty wagon, that came rattling along a crossroad near him. Thus suddenly awakened, the thought of the General's approach, the idea of being caught sleeping at his post, and the shame of having given the signal too late flashed together across his bewildered mind, and springing upon his feet, he caught his musket, shut both eyes, and fired, to the utter consternation of the wagoner, whose horses took fright at the sound, and became unmanageable. Poor Boaz, when he saw the mistake he had made and the mischief he had done, did not wait long to deliberate, but, throwing his musket over his shoulder, bounded into the woods, and was out of sight in the twinkling of an eye.

The sharp report of the gun rang far and wide through the hush of noontide, awakening many a drowsy echo that grumbled in the distance, like a man aroused untimely from his rest. At the sound of the long-expected signal gun, the whole village was put in motion. The drum beat to order, the ranks were formed in haste, and the whole military force moved off to escort the General in, amid the waving of banners,

the roll of drums, the scream of fifes, and the twang of the horse trumpet.

All was now anxious expectation at the village. The moments passed like hours. The lawyer appeared at the tavern door, with his speech in his hand; the schoolmaster and his scholars stood broiling in the sun, and many a searching look was cast along the dusty highway to descry some indication of their guest's approach. Sometimes a little cloud of dust, rolling along the distant road, would cheat them with a vain illusion. Then the report of musketry and the roll of drums, rattling among the hills and dying on the breeze, would inspire the fugitive hope that he had at length arrived, and a murmur of eager expectation would run from mouth to mouth. "There he comes! — That 's he!" and the people would crowd into the street, to be again disappointed.

One o'clock arrived; two, three, but no General! The dinner was overdone, — the landlady in great tribulation, the cook in a great passion. The gloom of disappointment began to settle on many a countenance. The people looked doubtingly at each other, and guessed. The sky, too, began to lower. Volumes of black clouds piled themselves up in the west, and threatened a storm. The ducks were unusually noisy and quarrelsome around the green pool in the stable yard, and a flock of ill-boding crows were holding ominous consultation round the top of a tall pine. Everything gave indication of an approaching thunder gust. A distant irregular peal rattled along the sky, like a volley of musketry. They thought it was a salute to the General. Soon after the air grew damp and

misty, it began to drizzle, a few scattered drops pattered on the roofs, and it set in to rain.

A scene of confusion ensued. The pedagogue and his disciples took shelter in the schoolhouse; the crowd dispersed in all directions, with handkerchiefs thrown over their heads and their gowns tucked up; and everything looked dismal and disheartening. The bar-room was full of disconsolate faces. Some tried to keep their spirits up by drinking; others wished to laugh the matter off; and others stood with their hands in their pockets, looking out of the window to see it rain, and making wry faces.

Night drew on apace, and the rain continued. Still nothing was to be heard of the General. Some were for despatching a messenger to ascertain the cause of this delay, but who would go out in such a storm! At length the monotonous too-too of the horse trumpet was heard, there was a great clattering and splashing of hoofs at the door, and the troop reined up, spattered with mud, drenched through and through, and completely crestfallen. Not long after, the foot company came straggling in, dripping wet, and diminished to one half its number by desertions. The tailor entered the bar-room, reeking and disconsolate, a complete epitome of the miseries of human life written in his face. The feathers were torn out of his clam-shell hat, his coat was thoroughly sponged, his boots full of water, and his buff pantaloons clung tighter than ever to his little legs. He trembled like a leaf: one might have taken him for Fever and Ague personified. The blacksmith, on the contrary, seemed to dread the water as little as if it were his element. The rain did

not penetrate him, and he rolled into the bar-room like a great sea calf, that, after sporting about in the waves, tumbles himself out upon the sand to dry.

A thousand questions were asked at once about the General, but there was nobody to answer them. They had seen nothing of him, they had heard nothing of him, they knew nothing of him! Their spirit and patience were completely soaked out of them; no patriotism was proof against such torrents of rain.

Every heart seemed now to sink in despair. Every hope had given way, when the twang of the stage horn was heard, sending forth its long-drawn cadences, and enlivening the gloom of a rainy twilight. The coach dashed up to the door. It was empty, not a solitary passenger. The coachman came in without a dry thread about him. A little stream of water trickled down his back from the rim of his hat. There was something dismally ominous in his look; he seemed to be a messenger of bad news.

"The Gin'ral! the Gin'ral! where 's the Gin'ral?"

"He 's gone on by another road. So much for the opposition line and the new turnpike!" said the coachman, as he tossed off a glass of New England.

"He has lost a speech!" said the lawyer.

"He has lost a coat!" said the tailor.

"He has lost a dinner!" said the landlord.

It was a gloomy night at the Bald Eagle. A few boon companions sat late over their bottle, drank hard, and tried to be merry; but it would not do. Good humor flagged, the jokes were bad, the laughter forced, and one after another slunk away to bed, full of bad liquor, and reeling with the fumes of brandy and beer.

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